

# THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

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## PHILANTHROPY WITH STRINGS

BY EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS

I

IF there is one thing on which all men have at all times agreed, it is the beauty and excellence of philanthropy. In the days before the common people had gained control, government made no effort to relieve human suffering, and the resources for its alleviation had to be coaxed out of private hands. To the ministers of relief the generous giver seemed a saint, and so the tradition grew up that it is unbecoming to 'look a gift horse in the mouth.'

Inevitably the gratitude and admiration which the public feels for benevolence is taken advantage of by those seeking to ingratiate themselves with their fellow citizens. It has long been recognized by the sponsors for charitable enterprises that the candidate for public office offers an easy mark for the collector. The popularity-hunter has always appreciated the wisdom of subscribing handsomely to benevolent enterprises. Infamous businesses have sought to insure tolerance for their nefarious operations by giving heavily and conspicuously to charities with a strong sentimental appeal. Liquor dealers and the proprietors of gambling houses and keepers of low resorts have been prompt with big contributions for the relief of visible dramatic suffering,

such as the hunger or cold of women and children.

In the bad old days of bank failures, the capitalist who had slipped out of the back door of a bank with a satchel of loot, while the tricked depositors were 'hammering in vain at the front entrance, sought to turn aside public odium and win his way back to respectability by a consistent course of diplomatic and ostentatious giving. Public-utility companies have often made a point of subscribing to charitable and civic undertakings, and their generosity has fluctuated pretty closely with the imminence of attack upon their privileges and their policies.

The resort to philanthropy as a means of propitiation becomes more general as the public becomes more and more critical of the ways of business. Eight or nine years ago it was often predicted that 'muck-raking' would so wound, exasperate, and alienate the rich that the fountains of benevolence would dry up. Exactly the opposite has occurred. Exposure has had a wonderful effect in loosening the purse-strings of the exposed and the exposable. As the impertinent question, 'Where did he get it?' becomes more insistent, and busybodies with lanterns go poking and peering about the foundations of majestic fortunes, the rush to philan-

thropic cover becomes ever more noticeable.

All the gifts by which wrong-doers contrive to cover their nakedness with the mantle of respectability, cost society more than they are worth. They are virtually purchases of unmerited leniency with money, and tend to break down the moral law just as compounding a felony breaks down the criminal law. It would be well if gifts of ill-gotten wealth were cast back into the teeth of the giver until he gave evidence of repentance and restitution. But, from the nature of the case, a compromising donation almost never meets with such a reception. It is a gift to a particular charity — a babies' fresh-air fund, a newsboys' home, or a rescue mission. The directors of the charity have this work at heart and naturally feel that the Spartan-like rejection of a large and much-needed contribution would be tantamount to engaging in moral sanitation at the expense of the babies or newsboys or Magdalens. Each charity, therefore, is under a strong inducement to stick to its own task, take thankfully whatever money comes to it for its work, and refrain from facing broad questions as to the relation between modes of wealth-getting and the social welfare.

This is the reason why private unendowed charities must, on the whole, be listed among the static rather than the dynamic forces in society. They have every temptation to centre their attention on their own bit of blessed work and to take the world as they find it. Why should they entertain questionings that might oblige them to discriminate between donations? What welcome will they have for ideas which are likely to offend or alarm their donors? Have they not every inducement to regard the class of poor whom they serve, and the class of rich who provide them with the means of serving the poor, as

natural and fixed features in the social system? So we have the anomaly that groups of people who have a very wide knowledge of special conditions, and who have acquired precious experience in particular lines of social service, have little to say when projects of social reconstruction are brought upon the carpet. Not only do many of them hold aloof from constructive social reformers, but often they throw cold water on proposed remedies and policies which are in successful operation elsewhere.

There is another and a greater limitation upon private philanthropy. Of late we have dropped the old, simple, soothing explanation of the cause of human misery. Nowadays we know too much about distress to dismiss it as merely the result of unfitness for the struggle for existence. We have learned that people struggle, not in still water, but in an agitated medium full of up-currents and down-currents; that poor swimmers may be borne up and good swimmers may be carried down. It is twenty years or more since social workers took to investigating seriously the head-waters of the endless flow of miserable people defiling before them. They have traced up the tributaries of this flood, and instead of finding their sources to be *individual congenital defects*, they have found many of them to be *adverse social conditions*. This being true, the really big thing to do is not just to handle the current of dependents as it flows past, but to get at the sources and find a way of plugging them up. Nature cannot be changed, — save by the slow methods of eugenics, — congenital weakness cannot be cured, but an adverse social condition admits of being removed.

Some of these conditions can be removed without disturbing anybody much, unless it be the tax-payer. Such are city congestion, or convivial social

customs, or truancy, or lack of recreation facilities. But most of the adverse social conditions are mixed up with some lucrative business, and you cannot go about to abolish them without having a business interest on your back. The social conditions which create down-currents are usually *conditions of work or conditions of living* — including under this latter, housing, food, and recreation. Now, the caterers to vice who seize upon, pervert, and exploit the instinct of young people for pleasure, have been pretty well outlawed, and there is no danger lest social workers be embarrassed by donations from *that* quarter.

Few, indeed, are the legitimate charities which have been brought under any obligation to the liquor traffic, gambling, the social evil, or the commercialized theatre. Only a few years ago, however, very respectable donors were protesting against raising the question of the housing of the working-class population. Happily, the movement for the betterment of housing is now so far advanced that it has become disgraceful knowingly to draw rentals from rotten and disease-breeding tenement houses. People who covet respectability have bowed to the requirements of the housing laws or else shifted their investments to other kinds of property. This leaves the real fight to centre around the questions of *the conditions and pay of labor*.

Now, there are few fortunes which do not rest on businesses that are more or less sensitive to such questions. The proposition that the conditions of labor need amendment if we are going to lessen very much the flow of misery and degradation, is a terrible shock to the whole policy of reliance on private philanthropy. Few indeed are the administrators of unendowed philanthropies who can advance many steps along this path without barking their shins.

## II

In Pennsylvania steel towns the Young Men's Christian Association has been quite inert with respect to any problem of the steel-workers which involves their relations to the company — such as the effects of the seven-day week, the twelve-hour day, the all-night shift, the twenty-four-hour turn every other week, or the preventable work accidents; for the reason that much of the money that runs it comes from the officers and superintendents of the mills.

To be sure, the Association inspires young men to lead a cleaner life, but what in mill towns is this problem compared with the problem of conditions of work? I talked once with an Association secretary about conditions in the West Virginia coal field. In one district where he has a strong work, the company owns 35,000 acres of land, — everything except the right-of-way of the railroad through that district. The moment one leaves the right-of-way, the company may treat him as a trespasser. If an investigator goes there without company authorization he may be treated as a trespasser the moment that he steps from the depot platform; if a labor organizer goes in there, the company can order him out of the house of any employee; a missionary going in there must have a company permit. Moreover, a band of company sluggers, known as 'the wrecking crew,' takes in hand any agitator or organizer who comes in, and beats him up so that he cannot proceed with his purpose.

I asked the Association secretary what he thought of this feudalism. He replied that such a system is necessary under the conditions and that it produces wonderful results. Prostitutes and gamblers are kept out, there are no saloons, liquor can be brought in only

on order, and the company allows no liquor wagon to leave a case of beer at any house where lately there has been drunkenness or 'rough-house.' This man was a good man, but he did not consider whether the system was making men or making serfs. He was interested only in whether the miners drank, and how they lived. The only Association secretary who could succeed in that district would be one who took that point of view, for much of his support came from the company, which was interested in preventing the men from making themselves unfit for their work.

In a certain city an energetic Association secretary was just completing his fund for a fine new building. One night his wife was called out to a case of distress, through which he got an insight into the bad conditions surrounding young working women in his city. After carefully getting up his facts, he formed a committee, secured speakers, and announced that on Friday there would be a public meeting to consider the problem of the young working women in local industries. Promptly he was summoned by telephone to meet the directors of his Association, and when he entered the room, one of his Christian backers burst out upon him with, 'What in h—l do you mean by getting up this public meeting? Don't you know I've got eighty girls working in the basement of my department store?' His other directors were equally stern, and he was ordered to call off his meeting or lose all the important contributions to his building fund. He held his meeting and immediately thereafter resigned.

I greatly admire the Young Men's Christian Association, and the only reason that I mention it so often here is because I have oftener stumbled upon its problems. But it is no more embarrassed in this respect than are the

church and the church philanthropies.

Nor are the secular charities free. During a strike of the iron-moulders in a mining-machinery works in a state capital, the company declared a lock-out and advertised throughout the state, 'Wanted, skilled iron-moulders. Good pay. No strike.' Some moulders removed to the capital to get this work and found too late that they were to be used as strike-breakers. Two such families sought relief of the Associated Charities, and the secretary expostulated with the president of the machinery company for bringing up-state iron-moulders into distress by luring them into a strike situation. The reply he got was, 'You people can't complain of having to handle such cases. Don't we contribute \$150 a year to your work?'

A student of mine, after three years of charity organization work, said to me, 'Professor, I've quit. There's nothing in it. The game's too thin. We coax money from the people who are the beneficiaries of the abuses that produce the wrecks we deal with. They let us deal with the wrecks, but we can't touch or even show up the conditions that produce them, because that would affect their income.' And the young man concluded, 'No more for me. I'm going to be a factory inspector, or something of that sort, where I won't be a dead letter.'

### III

The head worker of a social settlement, who had made plans for a much-needed housing investigation in the vicinity of the settlement, had to ditch the investigation because real-estate owners, who contributed each a few hundred dollars a year to the settlement fund, sent word that they were able to look after their property themselves.



In another case, a board representing the 'donor' point of view so curbs the head worker in his endeavors to take part in the movements affecting the welfare of his neighborhood, that he avows to me that he is straining every nerve to gain sufficient financial support in his neighborhood to justify him in cutting loose entirely from up-town philanthropists.

A social worker who had resided in many settlements said to me: 'Most of the successful settlement heads that I know are one thing to their boards and a quite different thing to their *clientèle*. Unless they can play this game well, they are lost. For if at the demand of their boards they exclude radicals and socialists from settlement clubs and gatherings, censor the list of speakers and denature the discussions before the men's club, they lose their hold on the neighborhood. If, on the other hand, the settlement is a place for free speech and the residents show a lively interest in everything affecting the welfare of the neighborhood, no matter what employers or corporations they may fall afoul of, they lose their hold on the board.'

The opposition of boards of directors of settlements to giving any real power in respect to policy to a house-council consisting of the residents themselves, or to conceding any place in its direction to representatives of the various neighborhood associations which the settlement has called into being, discloses an attitude of patronage inspired by upper-class ideas as to the stewardship of the rich over the poor.

The recent action of the entire body of eight volunteer resident workers in one of the oldest and most renowned social settlements in this country, in withdrawing from the house because the council (half of them Wall Street men who never come near the house and little comprehend the needs of the

neighborhood) regarded it as an act of insubordination for them to join the settlement society and elect one of their own number to the council, illustrates how those who give mere money arrogate to themselves the control of the policy of the settlement to the exclusion of those who give time and service. No wonder that the social centre, which uses public property and stands for community self-help, inspires so much more hope than the social settlement which represents the spirit of philanthropy.

Talk with a working man and he will tell you, 'To h—l with philanthropy! I want not charity, but justice.' When an injured workman receives compensation, as he does now, he can hold his head higher than he could when he was aided by a charity.

A wise settlement warden once declared in his report that a large part of the work at his settlement was 'of a disappearing character.' He maintained a playground in the settlement back-yard just long enough to induce the park commission to establish a better one in the park across the street. He held cooking classes in the settlement until the public schools put in cooking. He provided evening instruction for working boys until the state put in a continuation school. He ran a little employment office until the state established a big, well-equipped employment bureau in his neighborhood.

Here is the natural and logical relation of philanthropy to social reform. It is the function of private philanthropy to pioneer, to experiment, to try out new things and new methods, and just as soon as it has found the right way and standardized the method that gives results, the time has come for the community to take over the function. This releases a certain amount of private time and money to

go on and tackle something else. The means for initiating and carrying on experimental lines of social work must come from private benevolence, but the standardized lines of social work ought to be provided for by the community or state.

Once the philanthropist set up a drinking fountain; now there is good city water laid on everywhere. In olden times kindhearted people provided 'ragged schools' for the waifs of the alleys; now there are public schools for all. Once the benevolent created funds

to provide meals for indigent prisoners in the jails, but John Howard induced the state to feed its prisoners. Time was when the defectives were cared for by charitable groups; now the state provides for these unfortunates. There will always be opportunity for private philanthropy to render signal services; but a democratic society with a proper spirit of independence will not allow itself to form the bad habit of leaning upon the large private donor, but will take as its maxim, 'Let us do it ourselves.'

## SYNDICALISM AND THE GENERAL STRIKE IN ITALY

BY GEORGE B. McCLELLAN

THE events which occurred throughout Italy on June 9 and 10 of this year have brought home to the friends of existing social institutions everywhere the appalling fact that the syndicalistic general strike is no longer a vague theory, but has become a stern reality, which must be reckoned with in the future as a constant menace to law and order wherever syndicalism has taken root.

Syndicalist strikes have been called from time to time in different countries, or cities, and in various industries, with only partial success, and more for the purpose of practice than with any hope of bringing about the social revolution.

The so-called general strike in Russia in 1905, which secured from the government some more or less useful reforms, was really a revolution on a small scale, organized by the anarchist terrorists,

and carried on in the usual, old-fashioned revolutionary way. In May, 1911, the few syndicalists in Hungary joined with the socialists of all sorts and kinds in proclaiming a general strike at Budapest for the purpose of forcing the Prime Minister to keep his word and grant universal suffrage. After serious rioting and bloodshed, followed by pandemonium in the Chamber of Deputies, order was restored on the introduction by the Prime Minister of a suffrage bill in no sense universal in scope. The syndicalist strike called on the French railways some years ago, and that called in Milan last year, both ended in miserable failure, while in Portugal the success of the general strike has been due far more to the general condition of anarchy which exists in that unhappy country, than to the efforts of those who have organized labor agitation.

## I

To appreciate the significance of the recent general strike in Italy, it is necessary to have at least some understanding of present-day Italian political conditions. As in all Latin countries, the party system, as English-speaking peoples know it, does not exist in Italy; its place is taken by the so-called group system. No one group ever has a majority in the Chamber of Deputies, government being carried on by a combination of several groups, which may fall apart at any moment.

The Italian Chamber is divided between the so-called constitutionalist and anti-constitutionalist groups, — or parties, as their members like to call them. The constitutionalist groups are in number some half dozen, of varying degrees of conservatism and radicalism; they support the present constitution, advocate constitutional methods of reform, and are enthusiastically monarchial. The anti-constitutionalist groups include the socialists, who are divided into several sub-groups, and the republicans; they are opposed to the present constitution and are revolutionary.

In addition to the political groups represented in the Chamber of Deputies, there are other groups outside, either too small or too much scattered to elect representatives, or with theories which prevent their taking part in parliamentary elections. Chief among the latter are the two revolutionary groups of syndicalists and anarchists, who decline to compromise with conviction by even recognizing the justice of existing social conditions to the extent of having anything to do with existing party politics.

The four revolutionary groups — socialists, republicans, syndicalists, and anarchists — shade off by imperceptible degrees into each other. So that

while in theory their principles could not be further apart, in practice they are so inextricably mixed in membership and opinions as to present an almost hopeless puzzle to the non-Latin observer. Thus there are socialists with strong anarchistic, syndicalistic, or republican leanings, republicans whom we should call anarchists, and self-styled anarchists who are neither more nor less than pure socialists. In addition to this crossing and recrossing of members and ideas, which serves to unite the revolutionary groups, all four are bound together in their opposition to the present constitution and presumably also to the monarchy, and in their desire to bring about the social revolution by any possible means, as the condition precedent to the triumph of their various propagandas. They therefore work together in a sort of offensive and defensive alliance having for its purpose the destruction of existing institutions. The socialists and republicans are 'possibilists,' that is, they are willing to use constitutional and legislative means, as well as unconstitutional and revolutionary, for the triumph of the cause; while the anarchists and syndicalists are 'impossibilists,' rejecting all means except those of the revolution, although they are perfectly willing to profit by the work of their allies.

The leaders explain this somewhat inconsistent state of affairs by saying that after the social revolution has been accomplished it will be time enough to talk of dividing the spoils, and that meanwhile it is puerile to lay too much stress on consistency of principles. They say that the destruction of society by any and all possible means is the main thing, and that when the proletariat has come to its own, political conditions will adjust themselves without great difficulty.

This unholy alliance has been the

subject of grave concern to German and English socialists, who have feared that the anarchistic and syndicalistic leanings of their Italian comrades would discredit their cause throughout the world, just as in France it has been greatly injured by M. Hervé and his 'united socialists.'

The membership of the four revolutionary groups is chiefly proletarian, with a small admixture of professional men and shopkeepers, belonging to the little bourgeoisie. But membership in a political group by no means exhausts the political activity of the Italian workingman, who in addition belongs to his trade-union or *sindacato*, and to the *Camera del Lavoro*, the local labor exchange, similar to the French *Bourse du Travail*.

The unions and *camere* include members of all parties, even avowed monarchists; but they are dominated everywhere by the anti-constitutionalists. In some cities the republicans have their own exchanges or headquarters, which they call *Casa del Popolo*, or People's House.

Organized labor speaks through the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro*,—the national body,—composed of delegates from all the unions and all the *camere del lavoro*. In other words, labor is twice represented in the central organization: first by trades in the unions and second geographically by the *camere*. The executive committee of the confederazione is made up without much regard to nice political distinctions, being united in the cause of the revolution, which for its members is the cause of labor. When important matters are under discussion the central body, which sits at Rome, usually confers with the executive committees of the revolutionary parties within and outside of the Chamber.

Having the social revolution as its purpose it can easily be understood why

the syndicalist general strike should have appealed so forcibly to the Italian proletariat, for on paper, at least, it is one of the most plausible, if one of the wickedest, revolutionary schemes that has ever been presented. At the risk of being didactic it may be well to summarize very briefly the purposes of the new school which is playing so rapidly increasing a part in the politics of labor.

## II

Syndicalism is that new form of collectivism which advocates the concentration, in the hands of each industry, of its own instruments of production. Each industry, and not each trade, is to constitute a great labor-union which will be self-governing and self-regulating. The various industrial groups or unions are to be united by a central committee for the purpose of exchanging products. Every citizen will belong to an industrial union, and all will be equal, for there will be no more bosses, no more capitalists, no more oppressors.

This new social condition is to be brought about by the general strike. On a given day all work in a given country is to stop. The troops are called out, but the army having been carefully prepared, the soldiers decline to fire on the strikers and fraternize with them. In course of time the capitalists, finding that no one will work for them, abandon their factories to the strikers, who at once begin to operate them under syndicalistic auspices and the revolution is complete.

Fantastic as this proposal is, syndicalism has made great progress everywhere. In France it controls the *Confédération Générale du Travail*, which is the confederation of the trade-unions and labor exchanges; in England it has many followers; and in the United States it is known as the Industrial Workers of the World.

What must never be forgotten in discussing the chief weapon in the arsenal of the syndicalists, — the general strike, — is that it differs from the ordinary strike with which we are familiar, in that it is not called for the redress of grievances, or the raising of wages, or the betterment of labor conditions, but that its purpose is purely political. The ultimate object of the general strike is of course the social revolution, but until times are ripe for that great cataclysm, it is urged that the general strike should be employed whenever possible for the purpose of injuring capital and therefore weakening existing society, of fighting existing governments, and, by demonstrating its power, of showing to the world the strength of the labor cause. Syndicalism itself has made great progress in Italy, and its methods, especially the general strike, have been enthusiastically adopted by all the revolutionary parties. While it is as difficult to determine the exact number of syndicalists in any movement as it is to separate the members of the other revolutionary groups, it is certain that the influence of syndicalism in Italy is very great, and that it has become as much a menace to law and order there, as it has in France.

Last April, at what we should call the 'annual convention' of the General Confederation of Labor, the question of the general strike as a protest against the killing of workmen during labor troubles was thoroughly discussed. After the matter had been submitted to the various *camere del lavoro* it was determined that whenever thereafter a workman was killed by the public authorities as the result of labor agitation, the general strike should be called for not less than twenty-four hours and not more than forty-eight. It was emphasized that this was to be a general strike of protest, and in no sense for the purpose of bringing about

the revolution. The evident intention of the executive committee was to take the first opportunity of showing Italy the strength of organized labor, and the perfection of its organization.

The events which led up to the general strike last June were sordid in the extreme. Briefly they were as follows. Nearly two years ago a private soldier named Maseti shot the lieutenant colonel of his regiment, and was committed to the asylum as a dangerous lunatic. Some months ago another private soldier, named Mororri, was sentenced to one of the disciplinary companies for various offences against the regulations. Both soldiers came from Ancona and appear to have been anarchists. Early in June, Enrico Malatesta, leader of the Ancona anarchists and proprietor of the local anarchist newspaper, thinking the time opportune, in conjunction with the local syndicalists, socialists, and republicans, called a public outdoor meeting for June 7, the day of the *Statuto*, or Constitution, — equivalent to our Fourth of July, — for the purpose of expressing sympathy with the two convicts and protest against the disciplinary companies in particular and the army in general.

The Prime Minister, Salandra, forbade the meeting, as he feared that it would clash with the patriotic gathering to be held at the same hour in a neighboring square. The meeting was nevertheless held in the headquarters of the republican organization, and after it had adjourned, the audience, consisting of several hundred men and boys, marched to the square where the *Statuto* was being celebrated, for the purpose of making trouble. The police drove them back to the republican club, in which many of them took refuge, and began throwing on the heads of the police, and of the soldiers who had been hastily summoned, bricks, paving



stones, and furniture. Presently shots were fired from behind the blinds of an upper window of the club and thirteen of the police replied, firing twenty-eight shots in all. Whereupon the lieutenant in command immediately withdrew his men. Of the rioters, three were killed and five wounded, and of the police seventeen were wounded. By order of the Prime Minister the thirteen policemen who had fired were arrested and locked up pending judicial investigation into their conduct.

The next day the executive committee of the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro* met at Rome, and after consultation with the socialist and republican deputies, decreed a general strike throughout Italy, to begin the next day and to last until further orders, as a protest against 'the murder of the martyrs of Ancona.'

The only city that refused to obey the decree was Padua, while the government employees, including fully half of the railroad hands and nearly all the postal telegraph and telephone people, remained at work. The army, navy, and police were absolutely loyal. While the markets, in most cities, were allowed to open for an hour each morning of the strike, nothing whatever was permitted to enter the gates. A few trains were sent through to their destinations under police escort, and the central post and telegraph offices were kept open although no letters or telegrams were delivered. The trains and all public and private vehicles were stopped, all factories and shops were closed, no bread was baked, and even the restaurants and *caffés* were forced to put up their shutters. An exception was, however, made in favor of the wine and eating-shops frequented by the workers. In only a few instances were the electric lights put out, for everywhere the lighting plants were heavily guarded, engineer troops operating

them wherever necessary. No newspapers were published, and for two days no news was obtainable except the most exaggerated rumors passed from mouth to mouth.

Except in these comparatively minor particulars, for forty-eight hours the industrial life of Italy was entirely suspended. The morning of the first day passed quietly, but by afternoon disorder became frequent, and by evening almost everywhere there was more or less serious rioting. Before the night was over lamps and windows had been broken, barricades had been thrown up and torn down, and almost every city had its list of dead and wounded rioters and policemen to add to that of Ancona.

The most serious disturbances were in Romagna and the Marches, and for several days Ancona, Ravenna, and the neighboring towns were completely cut off from the rest of the world. In Ancona the anarchist Malatesta presided over a sort of revolutionary tribunal which issued passes to citizens and questioned arrivals in the town. Shops were broken into and pillaged, and a condition of near anarchy prevailed. At Ravenna a commissary of police was murdered, and General Aliardi and seven officers who were with him were held prisoners for five hours and made to give up their swords; while at Fabriano the republic was declared and the red flag hoisted from the municipio. It seems certain that for a time the majority of people at Ravenna believed that the republic had been proclaimed at Rome, and that the King had fled the country.

On the evening of the second day, June 10, the strike authorities reconvened, and while the anarchists and syndicalists urged the indefinite continuance of the strike with an avowed revolutionary purpose, they were outvoted by the socialists and republicans,



and the order was issued to return to work.

This order was generally obeyed and by the next day the greater part of Italy had resumed its normal life exactly as though it had never been interrupted. To this statement, however, there were important exceptions. Disorder continued in Romagna and the Marches for nearly a week more, and order was not completely restored in Milan and Naples for another forty-eight hours.

While no official statistics have been published, it is probable that the list of casualties included about ten policemen and soldiers killed, and one hundred wounded more or less severely, with twice that number of killed and wounded among the strikers. A great amount of property was destroyed, including two railway stations and a church in Romagna, and a number of houses that were burned in the country; in addition, shops were looted and citizens robbed in a majority of the cities in the kingdom.

Take it all in all, from the point of view of those who called the strike, it was a complete and triumphant success. Its machinery worked without a hitch, smoothly and perfectly. While it is probable, almost certain, as the recent local elections have shown, that the majority of the Italian people, including many of the peasants, almost all the shopkeepers and a considerable minority of the artisans, were opposed and are opposed to the principle of the general strike, yet so well was it organized, so terrified was the supine majority by the militant minority, that not a tradesman, not a laborer, not an artisan, dared to follow his usual avocation.

The government acted with what seemed to be great, although perhaps justifiable, weakness. It must not be forgotten that the Salandra ministry is

a stop-gap, governing during one of the intervals in which Signor Giolitti has seen fit to lay down the cares of office. Signor Salandra has no great party behind him, but remains in office by the grace of a combination of various constitutionalist groups. As parliament was in session during the strike, Salandra considered it absolutely necessary that he should receive a vote of confidence by a large majority; he believed that anything else would have meant the revolution. To obtain the required vote he thought himself forced to handle the situation with extreme caution so as to offend the susceptibilities of as few deputies as possible. Had he acted with greater vigor, the Chamber might have turned against him. This policy of extreme caution he communicated to the prefects, who are removable arbitrarily by him, so that in each province the authorities showed great unwillingness to meet the situation frankly.

The Italian, like all continental police, are armed as soldiers, with revolver, rifle, and sword-bayonet. They must either use their weapons to kill, or not at all, for there is no half-way course. As the military were ordered by the prefects only to use their weapons when their lives were in danger, it followed that the mob did very much what it pleased. The police and soldiers were unable to give protection to shopkeepers who wanted to open their shops, or to workpeople who wanted to work; in fact they seem to have advised a general compliance with the wishes of the strikers. Comparatively few arrests were made, and after the strike was over, all the important leaders in disorder, including Malatesta, were allowed to leave the country. A few hundred New York policemen, armed with night-sticks, and commanded by a New York police inspector, would probably have restored a city

in Italy to normal conditions in a few hours.

Had the second day of the strike not been so rainy as to damp the enthusiasm of the mob, it is altogether probable that it would have got out of hand, with nobody knows what ultimate consequences.

As it was, the strike was a grim warning to the government and to the nation that under favorable conditions it is quite possible that a minority of the people may destroy the whole social and political fabric of modern Italy. A lawless but well-organized minority frightened the authorities, terrified the public, and paralyzed the activities of nearly thirty million people for over forty-eight hours. Had the strike been called originally as a revolutionary act, and not as a mere protest, it might even then have succeeded.

It is difficult to explain the success of the movement, for to any one who knows the Italian character it is almost past belief that a majority of law-abiding, patriotic Italians should have quietly submitted to the dictates of the mob. It is a far cry from the patriotic enthusiasm of two years ago to the apathy which permitted bands of rioters to tear down Italian flags and to insult Italian officers. The Italian spirit has not changed, for the Italians of today are the sons of those who brought United Italy into being and are the self-same men who fought the war in Tripoli.

Yet as the days go by the revolutionary groups, with their ally, the General Confederation of Labor, are spreading the seeds of internationalism and anti-patriotism, and like all similar bodies the world over are preaching what they call the doctrine of human brotherhood, which, however, as they practice it, means nothing but extreme selfishness.

Patriotism has not died out in Italy

any more than it has in any other country; but it is a curious phenomenon, significant of the new spirit which is abroad, that for the moment Italy forgot that she was Italian. It cannot be that all the sacrifices of half a century have been in vain, that the new Italy, which her children have brought into being with such devotion and such love, will pass, and that the work of Cavour and Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel will come to nothing in the excesses of Malatesta and his gang.

### III

Whether the present government is willing or able to learn the very obvious lesson that the strike teaches, remains to be seen. If Italy is to attain that economic and industrial prosperity and social happiness which all her friends desire for her, during the years of her upbuilding she must not only have peace abroad, but good order at home. Living on the crater of a volcano of social revolution, that may explode at any moment, is not conducive to industrial development or social progress.

There are many Italians who seriously advocate a war with Austria as the only means of quelling the revolutionary spirit. As the Turkish war, which is scarcely over, had not the slightest influence in preventing the growth of the revolutionary propaganda, a war with any other power would be no more effective. The causes of discontent are too deep and too far-reaching to be removed by the waving of flags or the singing of patriotic songs.

The Italian workman is suffering from too much and too little education. He knows just enough to understand that all is not as it should be with him, and not enough to seek a reasonable cure for his ills. He is intelligent enough to desire to better his condition

and ignorant enough to blame every one but himself because his condition does not improve. Modern Italy has made great progress, at least upon the surface, but beneath there still remains much to be accomplished if United Italy is to become a really great power in industry and commerce. Italians boast that the number of illiterates has been reduced to twenty per cent of the total population. Assuming that this figure is correct, it still means a fearful prevalence of ignorance which must be largely done away with if Italian workmen are even to approximate the intelligence of our own.

The great problem which confronts government in Italy is how to spread education and improve sanitary and social conditions, — all of which require great expenditure, — while at the same time paying the enormous cost of a modern navy, and an army which numbers a quarter of a million men on a peace footing.

Italy assumed the obligations and claimed the rights of a first-class power long before she was economically able to do so. Her membership in the Triple Alliance has been maintained only at the cost of tremendous sacrifice at home. Money which should have gone to the development of Italy, has been used to keep up the pomp of her state and circumstance abroad, while the

prosperity of her people has been largely forgotten in the glory of German friendship.

Of course it is now too late to repair the mistakes of the past, for Italian pride will never consent to an acknowledgment that Italy is not a great power in every sense. Until, therefore, she really becomes one, the sacrifices of her people must continue. If the day is to dawn when Italy shall actually take her place as the industrial and economic equal of her great ally, Germany, it must be preceded by years of strict economy in public expenditure, wise economic and social legislation, and, above all, impartial justice and great firmness at the head of affairs.

Italy undoubtedly has a great future before her, if her people are willing to do their best. It is entirely in their hands, whether she will gradually develop into a mighty power, strong politically and industrially, or whether she will drift on the seas of opportunism, blown hither and thither by every political fancy of the moment, wasting her strength, her wealth, and her life in useless experiments and in extravagant expenditures. But it is as true in her case, as it is in that of any other nation, that industrial, political, and social progress can be achieved only through law and order, never through lawlessness and anarchy.

# THE DECADENCE OF HUMAN HEREDITY

BY S. J. HOLMES

## I

IN any discussion of the possible decadence of the human stock it is necessary to distinguish clearly between progress in knowledge and institutions and progress in the congenital endowment of the race. It is quite obvious that within historic times improvement in the former has been out of all proportion to the development of the latter. Mankind, especially in the domains of western civilization, has come to regard progress as the natural if not necessary course of things. It is only recently that we have begun to realize that the rapid and impressive advances in civilization that have been made, by no means indicate an improvement in the innate qualities of human beings, and that these advances may even go along with race-deterioration.

Whether or not the hereditary endowment of the civilized races of man is undergoing a process of deterioration is a problem of the greatest possible moment. It is not a simple problem. It is not to be solved *a priori* on the basis of assumptions regarding the withdrawal of natural selection. It is a problem to be solved only by the accumulation of many data and by a knowledge of the factors at work in the modification of the hereditary forces among human peoples.

To obtain an insight into the factors of human evolution it is essential to have an accurate knowledge of the factors which are responsible for the evolution of the lower animals. On this

subject biologists are unfortunately by no means agreed. The factor of use-inheritance, upon which many biologists formerly laid so much stress, has rapidly lost adherents, and I think it must be conceded that if it is operative at all it is a factor of minor importance. Despite the modern criticisms of natural selection, with which I confess I have small sympathy, the doctrine of selection in one or another of its modifications stands to-day as the only naturalistic hypothesis which contains any principle of explanation of progressive adaptive evolution.

We have no reason to suppose that man, so far as the early stages of his biological evolution are concerned, is a result of the operation of any factors essentially different from those which have brought the lower animals up from the most primitive forms of life. At the present time we have no reasonable recourse from the conclusion that man owes his origin to selection, and that only by selection in some form can his congenital endowments be improved.

## II

The evolution of human society and civilization has gradually brought mankind under conditions of existence which are so far different from those prevailing during the infancy of the race that the character of the stock can scarcely fail to be seriously modified. To judge from the remarkable superiority of the brain-power of man over that of the primates, the early periods

of human or the later stages of pre-human evolution must have been exceptionally favorable to the selection of individuals of superior mental endowment. So far as our vision can penetrate into the darkness of these times, mankind occupied itself quite largely in the destructive, but eugenically wholesome, occupation of fighting, — fighting not only with large beasts of the field, but also — and this is probably much more important from the standpoint of evolution — with other clans and tribes of the human species.

The advent of man is the expression of the superiority of brains over brute force in the struggle for life. While we may never recover the history of the period between the primates and primitive man, what we know of the general factors of evolution justifies us in the conjecture that it was a period of intense struggle, with a lively elimination of the unfit.

The course of human history as far back as we can follow it is one of warfare of tribe with tribe, and nation with nation, the conquerors of one age being overcome by new invaders of another lineage in the next. Along with this perpetual conflict, and to a considerable degree because of it, man has not only increased greatly in intelligence, but has developed those attributes of courage, reliability, loyalty, and mutual helpfulness which make for social solidarity and corporate efficiency. Gruesome as the struggle for existence may be to contemplate, and fraught as it has been with pain and sorrow, it is a process to which the race is largely indebted for its congenital improvement. It may be that it is an unfortunate method of bringing highly endowed creatures into the world, but it is Nature's way. And Nature is quite indifferent as to whether we approve it or not. What Nature is interested in, to speak figu-

ratively, is success in the struggle for existence. There is no evidence that she cares a fig for progress; only so far as progress increases the chances of survival, is it any of Nature's concern. And at any time she is perfectly ready to undo all her work, and to reduce a highly complex organism to the most degenerate of creatures, whenever the conditions favor simplicity of organization. Degeneration from a highly evolved state has occurred time after time in the course of evolution, and the possession of a complex organization is not the slightest guaranty of further improvement, or even of a secure hold on the position that has been attained.

There are many forces in human society which make for degeneration, and our safety lies in clearly recognizing them. Only recently is the civilized world becoming awakened to the deleterious influence of modern warfare. Dr. D. S. Jordan, in his addresses on the 'Blood of the Nation,' and the 'Human Harvest,' has set forth in a clear and forcible manner the sad havoc which war has played in eliminating the best of the human breed. In times of conflict, the men of manly vigor, brains, and courage go to the front to die by thousands in the cause of national defense. The weak, the cowardly, the mercenary, the degenerate, remain behind, to multiply. The loss to any nation resulting from the continual draining away of its best blood can scarcely fail to weaken it, until it may eventually fall a prey to the encroachments of its neighbors. Jordan, following several historians of note, attributes the downfall of Greece and Rome, the gradual decay of Spain and other nations, largely to this reversal of selection. Whether or not this is the principal cause of decadence in the instances cited, it is very probable that the continual sapping of strength consequent upon the sacrifice of hundreds



of thousands of their best men has been a powerful influence in undermining the physical and mental heredity of these nations.

While modern civilized warfare is one of the most potent agencies for the elimination of the best blood and the propagation of weaklings, there can be little doubt that this influence of war is limited to comparatively recent times. It is because warfare has become civilized that, eugenically considered, it is such a powerful influence for race-deterioration. Early struggles were wars of extermination in which the unfit had little chance. The Polynesians commonly massacred all of the conquered tribe, including men, women, and children. The same practice was common among the primitive Australians, the natives of New Guinea and New Zealand. The Kaffirs and many other African tribes exterminated completely the peoples whom they conquered; and among many tribes of North American Indians such wars of extermination were frequent. Wars of extermination among the more civilized Egyptians, Persians, and Hebrews were by no means rare. Of the Amorites, whom Jehovah delivered into the hands of his chosen people, it is said in Deuteronomy, 'And we took all his cities at that time . . . utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. But all the cattle and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourselves.' And in the campaigns of Joshua it was the rule that the men, women, and children of the conquered cities should all be put to the sword.

When complete extermination was not practiced, the vanquished were commonly enslaved, or subjected to such conditions that they languished or eventually died out, the Hebrew people forming a luminous exception to the rule in their persistence through the vicissitudes of conquest, practical

enslavement, and all kinds of subsequent persecution. In the conflict among primitive societies not only was the best-endowed individual most apt to survive in the hand-to-hand encounters which were then in vogue, but the groups in which strength, intelligence, organization, and mutual service were most highly developed, would easily triumph over groups with less individual efficiency or social coherence. The population was replenished by the most efficient members of society instead of the weaklings, so that the influence of primitive conflict stands diametrically opposed to the effect of modern civilized warfare upon the hereditary endowment of the race.

### III

But apart from conflict, the weak in barbaric times had little chance to perpetuate their defects. Where exogamy prevailed, a man had to be able to capture a wife or go without one, and in many tribes wives were only to be won after a trial of strength or skill. Among the Chippewa Indians, says Richardson, 'any one may challenge another to wrestle, and if he overcomes, may carry off his wife as a prize. The bereaved husband meets his loss with resignation, which custom prescribes in such a case, and seeks his revenge by taking the wife of another man weaker than himself.'

Among many primitive peoples it was customary to eliminate epileptics, idiots, lunatics, and persons afflicted with incurable ills; and the practice of putting to death weak, deformed, and sickly children was extremely prevalent. The custom among the Spartans of raising only their stronger children will occur to every one; even Aristotle advocates the rule that nothing imperfect or maimed shall be brought up. And Plato, who elaborated the most

rigid eugenic programme ever devised, recommends that the children of the more depraved, and such others as are in any way imperfect, be hidden away in some secret and obscure place.

Eugenics is by no means a modern science. Primitive peoples took it much more seriously and practiced it more consistently than we do to-day. There can be no manner of doubt that the weak, the deformed, the foolish, the insane and degenerate of all kinds, have a much greater opportunity to survive and propagate their defects than they commonly had among primitive peoples.

It is scarcely necessary to dwell upon the greatly reduced influence of natural selection that has been brought about by the advance of medicine and surgery and the knowledge of how to check and control many epidemics that formerly decimated the human race. Defects of eyesight, hearing, and many other qualities, no longer entail the extinction of their possessors. Natural selection still operates on the human species, and will always continue to do so, but our medical skill and our fostering of the weak greatly reduce its potency.

When we compare the various present influences tending to improve the human breed with those operative in past times, the prospect seems rather gloomy for the future of the human family. We no longer have the elimination of the weak through tribal strife, but in its place the highly deleterious influence of modern war, which has not only worked incalculable injury in recent centuries, but probably has more evil in store for us. We no longer leave the weak and imperfect infants to perish, but do everything in our power to rear them, and then give them full liberty to perpetuate their defects. Except during their period of actual confinement in asylums, no restriction

is generally placed on the multiplication of the insane. With sixteen exceptions, there are no states in the union which forbid the marriage of the feeble-minded, and while other states regard such marriages as void, there is no penalty incurred either by the contracting parties or by the person who solemnizes the union, and consequently matings among the feeble-minded are of common occurrence. In only fifteen states is there any prohibition upon the marriage of the insane. Only in Indiana and in Washington is there any restriction placed upon the marriage of confirmed criminals. There are few creatures so degenerate but that most of the states of our enlightened country give them full sanction to perpetuate their impure stock, and the conditions in most European countries in this respect are considerably worse than in the United States. Through ignorance, indifference, false ideas concerning 'personal liberty,' and the absorption of legislators in matters of more immediate political expediency, we are permitting the accumulation of a vicious and defective heredity which would not be tolerated among most primitive peoples.

#### IV

This disappearance of most of the eugenic influences operative in the early history of mankind is not the worst danger, bad as it is, that besets us. Society, as at present organized, tends to withdraw its best blood from contributing its share to the heritage of the next generation. While it is unjustifiable to estimate the eugenic worth of a family in terms of wealth or social position, and while what are called the lower ranks of society often contain its best blood, the classes that have become distinguished through their culture or their achievements

certainly have a hereditary endowment considerably above the average. Pearson has shown that mental ability is inherited to about the same degree as various physical characteristics. This fact combined with the important conclusion, also established by Pearson, that less than twenty-five per cent of the married couples, or from one sixth to one eighth of the total population, produce over fifty per cent of the next generation, shows how very important it is that this one sixth or one eighth should be drawn from the better element of society. If the population is recruited even a little more from the less desirable individuals in each generation, it will not take many generations for the bad stock to replace the good.

It is a well-known fact that the educated classes, represented by such professions as lawyers, clergymen, doctors, and professors, as a rule marry late and produce few children, whereas the feeble-minded, the shiftless, and the imprudent usually have a birth-rate far above the average. Graduates from our colleges and universities have as a general rule scarcely enough children to perpetuate their families. The average number of children of the graduates of Harvard is less than two, and the record of Yale is no better than this. The showing of various other colleges and universities is but little better.

Judging from the statistics available on the subject, education is proving a formidable obstacle to eugenic progress. The one redeeming feature about it is that as students are sent to colleges and universities in ever-increasing proportions to the population, those who are selected for higher education are coming to be less representative of the best brains of the country. It is a common opinion that the general quality of our undergraduates is deteriorating, but if this be true the rea-

sons may be found in various influences other than eugenic factors.

Still, the fact that the college communities include so many of the offspring of people of exceptional talent and achievement is a circumstance that is continually depriving the race of its best blood. There can be no doubt that under our present régime the more intellectual families are rapidly disappearing. It is from mediocrity and from the levels below mediocrity that the population is replenished. The danger of degeneration from this fact is all the greater because the evil is insidious and unobtrusive. If society could be brought to realize how enormous may be the loss entailed by the gradual extinction of those families which furnish the intellectual leaders of the race, it would bestir itself with a great deal more vigor to provide a remedy for the situation.

Society may accomplish much by checking the multiplication of the feeble-minded, the criminals, and the insane; but how to keep from being swallowed up in the fecundity of mediocrity is a much more difficult problem. We can get along with a small percentage of the mentally and morally defective much better than we can afford to lose the priceless blood that gives us our great men.

## V

I have indicated some of the causes which, so far as can be judged, have been and are making for the deterioration of the race. It may be asked, however: Is it known as a matter of fact that the race is deteriorating? Can it be proved by statistics that the race is really on the down grade?

At the present time it must be admitted that the actual statistical proof of race-deterioration is very incomplete. We simply do not have the sta-

tistics to show whether our inheritance has improved or deteriorated. But from our knowledge of the evolutionary factors at work in human society it is scarcely possible to avoid the conclusion that a certain amount of decadence is inevitable. We know that mental and moral defects are inherited; we know that the stocks with a record of intellectual achievement are multiplying with relative and increasing slowness; we know that the physically and mentally unfit reproduce more rapidly than under the conditions of more primitive civilization, and that their progeny are fostered and allowed to continue their defects. Amid all the influences tending to lessen the fertility of the more desirable classes of human beings there is scarcely any factor, beyond a relatively feeble remnant of natural selection, which is working for the perpetuation of the best blood.

With our present statistics it is difficult to disentangle the effects of environment from the effects of a vitiated inheritance. In the United States there has been during several decades a general increase in crime. How much this is to be attributed to immigration and changed environmental conditions it is impossible to say. Crime in Europe is also on the increase, but here again we cannot estimate the relative rôles of hereditary and environmental factors. It is the same with insanity. During the thirteen years before 1903 the insane in institutions in the United States increased 100 per cent, while the population as a whole increased 30 per cent. Since 1859 the insane in England and Wales have increased over 230 per cent while the general population has increased 77 per cent. Of these insane, 47,000, over one third, were married.

This increase, which may be paralleled by statistics from other countries, may be due in part to the fact that a

relatively larger part of the insane are put into asylums; it may be due in part to changed conditions of social and economic life; but our rapidly accumulating knowledge of the heredity of insanity makes it probable — and we can only say probable — that much of it is due to an increase of hereditary defects. That our knowledge of the subject is just emerging from a chaotic state is evinced by the statement of Kraepelin, one of the very highest authorities, in the seventh edition of his *Psychiatrie*, that ‘we must regard the statistics of heredity in insanity merely as facts of experience without finding in them the expression of a law which should hold in every case.’ In the past few years certain forms of insanity have been found to follow a very definite law in their hereditary transmission. Through the careful investigation of a number of family records in England and in America it has been established that insanity is frequently inherited in Mendelian fashion, and that where there are no insane among the near relatives of the afflicted person, there are usually neuropathic tendencies which manifest themselves in nervous disorders. When neuropathic mates with neuropathic the result is a fearful harvest of neuropathic offspring.

The studies of Goddard on the heredity of feeble-mindedness, — and feeble-mindedness is on the increase in England and America, — and those of Davenport and Weeks on the inheritance of epilepsy, have shown that the same kind of transmission prevails in these cases. Dr. Wilmarth, on the basis of his observations of families of the feeble-minded, estimates ‘that at least two thirds of the feeble-minded have defective relations.’

It is possible to object that the increase in insanity and feeble-mindedness during recent decades may not

mean increasing pollution of human blood; but since the traits mentioned are so strongly inherited, and those possessing them are allowed to multiply with so little restriction, it seems very probable that we are having a gradual accumulation of a vitiated heredity. Whether the hereditary defectives are increasing or not, we do not want them; and the duty of society to

check their multiplication by all safe and humane means is perfectly plain.

In order to estimate the probable trend of human evolution it may be instructive to represent in tabular form the various influences tending to modify our racial inheritance at the present time as compared with those affecting mankind in the earlier stages of its evolution.

#### PRIMITIVE MAN

Natural Selection, actively operating.  
Sexual Selection, frequently working for race-improvement.  
Elimination of defectives.  
War tending to the multiplication of the best stock.  
Relative fecundity of best endowed.

All along the line the eugenic factors were more potent in primitive than in civilized man. Not only are the forces working for race-improvement becoming weaker as civilization advances, but as a result of civilization there have arisen tendencies which operate strongly against the weakened forces of eugenic progress. About all we have left to counteract these untoward agencies is a very uncertain measure of sexual selection and the remnant of natural selection which medical science has not succeeded in disposing of.

What it is feasible to do to remedy this unfortunate situation is one of the most important of the problems that confront the human race. My aim in the present article, however, is diag-

#### CIVILIZED MAN

Natural Selection, reduced in intensity.  
Sexual Selection, of doubtful eugenic value.  
Preservation of defectives.  
War tending to elimination of the best stock.  
Relative sterility of best endowed.

nosis rather than the prescription of remedies. Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from pointing out that there is one measure, the prevention of the multiplication of the defective classes, which is so obvious a duty and so feasible a project that the continuation of our present *laissez-faire* policy is nothing short of a crime to society. The removal of the pollution of human inheritance that comes from the worst one or two per cent of its stock would, in a few generations, go a very long way toward reducing the numbers in our insane asylums, poorhouses, and jails. This much in the way of eugenic reform can easily be accomplished. The other aspects of the problem are matters for further reflection.

# OKHOY BABU'S ADVENTURE

BY CHARLES JOHNSTON

## I

'YOUR HONOR!' Okhoy Babu interrupted, with that oily smile of his, 'I request an adjournment of the court, if your Honor pleases! I have just heard of important new evidence in this case!'

Indranath Babu, my chief clerk, began to frown and cluck with his tongue. He was long-nosed and very dark, with a face like a wise bird; a fine fellow for all his ugliness, and to be trusted. He had that trick of clucking, like an offended wren, when things were going awry, and I had learned to watch for it.

So Indranath Babu clucked and frowned, and Okhoy Babu stood expectant, with his fat smile that was at once servile and cynical. I did not like Okhoy Babu, but that was hardly a ground for refusing an adjournment.

It was one of those bloodthirsty boundary disputes that every now and then come in from the outlying villages. Hari Dass and Kishto Dass had fallen out about a field and had clubbed each other so vigorously with bamboos that I had been called out at two in the morning to take their dying depositions; Oshotosh Babu, the subdivisional surgeon, meanwhile stirring them up with strong spirits of ammonia. They were not yet dead, however, and might pull through, so the police and I had gathered in an armful of their club-men, and I was trying to get at the rights of the story in my dingy little court.

I was tired, after a long and irritat-

ing morning which had included a verification of the subdivisional stock of stamps — soaked together into slabs during the rains — and the dispensing of enough opium and hashish to demoralize a city. Further, it was tiffin time. So I ignored the clucking of Indranath Babu, in spite of ripe experience.

'How long do you want, Babu?'

'I shall be ready to go on later in the afternoon, your Honor! An hour or two, not more!'

'Three o'clock?'

'Very good, your Honor!'

So the court adjourned and went to tiffin, while Indranath Babu frowned and gathered up the papers of the case.

I inhabited a funny little Board-of-Works bungalow close to the courthouse, and lunched in the half-darkness of the central room to escape the midday glare. Poonaswamy of the crimson turban fed me indifferent well on local *moorghee*, — which is to say, chicken, — with curried rice and vegetables from the bazaar. That was according to precedent. But Okhoy Babu added a diversion.

With a dashing carelessness I would not have believed him capable of, he came across the grass with a troop of witnesses and squatted down under a tree not twenty yards off in a ring of purple shade, and began one of those little rehearsals which do so much for an effective case in court.

It was rather like an open-air Sunday-school, Okhoy Babu reciting, and his witnesses repeating in chorus — that came to me as a murmur across the



grass. I realized now why that offended wren, Indranath Babu, had clucked and frowned.

After a while the Babu and his scholars trooped away again, letter-perfect by this time. I rolled a cigarette and smoked in the coolest of the verandas, and schemed the undoing of Okhoy Babu.

Three o'clock came. I took my seat in court. Indranath Babu had the case called. An old gray-beard testified first; Okhoy Babu was careful of precedence. Among other things, the gray-beard said, —

'I know that the field belonged to Hari Dass, because I was present when his father planted a tree in it.'

Then Okhoy Babu called a middle-aged man, who, among other testimony, declared, —

'I know the tree which the father of Hari Dass planted. The field is his.'

Then a young fellow came, swaggering, and grinned familiarly at the court. He said, —

'When I was a boy, I often climbed in the tree which was planted by the father of Hari Dass. Hari Dass caught me and beat me. So I know the field is his.'

Something flashed through my mind: the Elders and Susanna. — 'A Daniel come to judgment!' — Okhoy Babu, you once attended missionary school, but I don't believe you read the apocryphal books! At any rate it was worth trying.

So I stopped Okhoy Babu in mid-career, and had my court policeman gather all those witnesses into my private room, with strict orders to let no one else in. Okhoy Babu was puzzled but smiled energetically. Indranath Babu, scenting fun, suspended his ominous clucking, but his brow was still furrowed.

I had the elderly party brought back first.

'You were present when the father of Hari Dass planted a tree in his field?'

'I was present, your Honor!' answered the elderly party, glancing round toward his counsel.

'Do not look at the Babu! Look at me!' I held his eye. 'What kind of a tree was it?'

The elderly party blinked, cleared his throat, and finally said, —

'It was a — cocoanut tree, your Honor!'

Okhoy Babu began to wriggle round toward the door of my room.

'Please remain where you are, Babu! The witnesses are quite safe!'

'Yes, your Honor!' and Okhoy Babu smiled a large but rueful smile.

Then I told my policeman to admit the middle-aged man.

'You remember the tree which the father of Hari Dass planted?'

'I remember it very well, your Honor!' and, curiously enough, he too looked round to Okhoy Babu.

'Never mind the Babu. Turn toward me. What sort of tree was it?'

He too winced and pursed his lips.

'It was a — date-palm, your Honor!'

Okhoy Babu's face was worth watching. Indranath Babu's brow was smooth and in his eyes was a look of deep content.

I had the young fellow in.

'You climbed the tree in the field of Hari Dass, and Hari Dass caught you and beat you?'

'Yes, your Worship!'

'What kind of tree was it?'

He brazened it out; did not look round at Okhoy Babu but said boldly, —

'A jack tree, your Worship!' — which is a kind of bread-fruit, with green, hedge-hog fruits as big as your head.

By this time Okhoy Babu was on thorns.

From the remaining witnesses, I col-

lected a few more kinds of tree. Then I called my policeman:—

'Constable! Take these witnesses back into my room and keep them!' Then to Indranath Babu:—

'Babu, please make out warrants for perjury against all these witnesses; and as for you, Okhoy Babu —'

But Okhoy Babu was gone. A cloud of dust whirling down the road to the bazaar indicated his line of motion.

I watched him through the unglazed window, considered a while, and decided not to decide. I was well content to lose Okhoy Babu, for all the clucking of my chief clerk.

## II

That was late in October. A month later I was in camp, on the western border of the subdivision. I had been going over the wage-books of the village watchmen, examining the nice, oily little chaps in the school, hearing them do Euclid in Bengali, and trying to hold a Local Board election, where the free and independent voters had evidently got their instructions from their landlord, the local zemindar, and voted for him with meek unanimity. Great are democratic institutions in a land like India!

Evening had come, and I had made arrangements to return to Berhampore by *palki*, to arrive the next forenoon. Poonaswamy of the red turban had fed me on wooden-flavored moorghee and tiny potatoes, with really good coffee and a cigarette, and I was ready to go.

The *palki*-bearers were standing about, whispering and laughing; big, stalwart chaps, grayish-yellow in color, with large cheek-bones and huge hands and feet. There was evidently a lot of Santal blood in that part of the subdivision.

An awkward thing to get into, a pal-

ki. You have to sit down on the ground and crawl in, and when in, you must lie down; there is n't room to sit up without bumping your head. Just a long box with a sliding side-door, and swung on two long bamboos; comfortable enough, though, to sleep in.

So, feeling decidedly self-conscious, I sat me on mother earth, and crawled sideways into my box.

'All ready! To Berhampore!'

It was one of those lovely evenings that the beginning of the cold season brings, not too warm, and scented like a garden. My bearers swung the *palki* up on their shoulders and pattered off barefoot in the dust, chanting a jig-jog song that Kipling renders, 'Let us take and heave him over! Let us take and heave him over.'

We took a short cut across the wide rice-fields and by the edge of a bit of forest. There were huge trees, their boughs twisted together, and hung with masses of a kind of wild cucumber whose tendrils were like enormous skeins of yellow floss silk, with here and there a scarlet fruit hanging down, like a huge Easter-egg. A fine wildness about it all.

'Let us take and heave him over! Let us take and heave him over!'

They could, too, with the greatest ease. Here am I, twenty or thirty miles from the nearest man of white race, absolutely defenseless, unarmed, amid three hundred thousand natives, according to the last census, who might easily enough have a grudge to wreak; but I am trusting myself to their tender mercies in complete confidence. I suppose a Deputy Magistrate could not disappear without some stir! The paternal government would look him up. . . . Might not do him much good, though. . . . However . . .

At this point I went to sleep. . . . Something very soothing about the jog-jog of a *palki* and that 'heave-

him-over' song and the patter of bare feet on the earth. . . .

Once, during the night, I was wakened by the wild, diabolic yelling of jackals, an inferno broken loose in the midnight jungle. Something startling and hair-raising about jackals; they begin so unexpectedly. . . . But I rolled over and went to sleep again, with the patter-patter in my ears.

Then we came to a stop, and there was some kind of a row among the pal-ki-bearers. That wakened me again. I pulled open the sliding-door, and, in the curt phrase of Anglo-India, said, —

'Shut up, dogs, and let me sleep!'

They did, and I slept — till morning this time, waking when it was full sunlight, with the expectation of recognizing the Berhampore landmarks by the roadside.

One thing intrigued me: we seemed to be jolting uphill. But there is n't a hill within thirty miles of Berhampore, or anywhere in the delta; not even a mound as big as an ant-hill. So I slid the door open to see.

'Where the mischief—?'

We were in thick jungle, a hillside apparently, with a kind of cattle-track running up it, under huge, matted trees laced together with creepers like tangled skeins of yarn thrown over the branches. A kind of green gloom, and a fresh coolness in the air.

I shouted to the bearers to stop. They stopped, and I crawled out, in the wormlike, undignified fashion inseparable from palkis, and repeated my question: —

'Where the mischief are we?'

I repeated my question in English, chiefly for my own benefit, in Bengali, in Hindustani. The bearers only grinned sheepishly and shook their heads.

I was very angry and made vigorous use of the vocative case and the imperative mood. I might as well have spok-

en in pluperfect subjunctives, for they evidently did not understand a word.

Like the *harmattan* wind, I raged myself out, and saw that it was perfectly useless to talk to these gray-yellow dunderheads, who grinned foolishly at my best objurgations.

I began to realize that I was getting hungry. Also, I wanted a smoke.

Fortunately this last want was easily supplied. I had the makings and matches. So I sat down on a rock — there isn't a rock in Berhampore, or in all the delta, for that matter — and rolled and lit a cigarette. That appealed to those yellow-gray kidnappers. They produced tobacco leaf from their dingy shoulder-cloths, a knot in the corner of which forms a Bengali pocket, and began to roll *al fresco* cigars. They even had the cheek to borrow my matches — with such child-like innocence in their eyes that I gave them. So we all smoked, out there in the jungle. They were very respectful, nay, deferential, for all their kidnapping, and if I had had some breakfast, say some good coffee and rolls, it would not have been half bad. But I was beastly hungry and getting hungrier. What had become of Poonaswamy of the scarlet turban, I could not even speculate on.

Finally I appealed to an old chap among the bearers — there were eight of them, two relays — who had crisp white hair on his head and jowl, and a mat of white hair on his chest. I said to him in English, —

'Old gentleman, please get me some breakfast!'

He shook his head and replied, at great length, in a tongue of which I did not know a word, but which I guessed to be the Santali of the hills. We can see them, pale blue on the horizon, from the western edge of the subdivision. As we were palpably among hills, — or at least upon one hill; you couldn't see much of anything, because of

the dense jungle, — and as there were n't any other hills, I supposed they must be the ones. So the old gentleman talked, very eloquently, and with gestures; but from all his eloquence no breakfast supervened. I was n't even certain that he was talking about breakfast, but I was quite certain that I wanted mine.

So I fell back on a language more practical than Esperanto or Volapük — I opened my mouth and pointed down my throat. That evidently went home. The old gentleman's face lighted up, he smiled luminously and pointed up the trail through the forest. Then he pointed to the sliding door of the palki. That was good sense. If breakfast would not come to me, I must go to breakfast, and the palki was the only way. I did not even consider walking back along the track we had come, because I knew that, in that direction, breakfast was at least forty miles off, and the jungle fairly well stocked with big game, — leopards, tigers, to say nothing of snakes, — and my only weapons were a box of matches and a pencil.

So I sat down on the ground, and slid back into the palki, to the evident relief of my bearers, who shouldered me and went forward, seemingly much rejoiced in their minds.

About noon — I had beguiled the hours, and tried to beguile my appetite with cigarettes — we came to a clearing, and they set the palki down.

A horribly undignified way to make one's entrance, crawling out of a beastly box, but it had to be done. A crowd was there to receive us, the same gray-yellow folk with big cheek-bones, chiefly adorned with peacock feathers stuck jauntily in their hair; and, among the leaf-mat huts, a mob of women and children.

I got on my feet and looked about. The crowd gathered about deferen-

tially, saluting by bringing their finger-tips up to their foreheads and then stretching out their arms, as if they were going to dive; apparently Santali for 'Good morning!'

The old gentleman from among my bearers then saluted a revered old person in the crowd, and made a little speech. The old person seemed pleased. He said something monosyllabic and unintelligible to my bearer and then stepped forward, and said to me, in fairly good Bengali, —

'Incarnation of Virtue! We offer you respectful salutations!'

I replied that I was glad of it, and asked, —

'Where are we? Who are you? And why, in the name of Mahadeb, have you brought me here?'

Here is his astounding reply, just as he made it: —

'Umbrella of the Poor! This is a village of Men, whom the Bengalis call Santals. We have a Babu. We are going to kill him, and we wished your Honor to be present, to see!'

'We have a Babu, and we are going to kill him' — just that. It took my breath away.

Astonishment, the desire to gain time, and primitive instinct, worked together in my reply: —

'That is all very well. But you must not kill him until I have had some breakfast.'

So they fed me, under the village fig tree: india-rubber-like moorghee, with curried vegetables, and the finest rice I ever tasted. But no coffee, and I particularly wanted coffee.

As I ate, the dignified elderly person sat beside me, very affable and friendly. I approached the question obliquely: —

'How does it come that you speak such good Bengali?'

My speech was really more polite than that. These Oriental tongues have shades.

'I spent ten years in Berhampore,' he replied very courteously, 'in the Sudder jail. I was on road-gang work at Kandi, and the foreman — a Bengali pig — hit me, so I killed him. The judge asked who did it, and I of course told him, so I was sent to jail. There I learned Bengali, and, because of my knowledge of English law, my people have elected me Headman.' And he smiled, very much pleased with himself.

Yes; English law; but how about killing babus? I put it a little less directly, but it amounted to that.

He said that, of course, this was different. He would make it all plain after breakfast, and then they would kill the Babu. Everything should be done in an orderly way.

All the men had spears, as well as their jaunty peacock-feathers. I, as I have said, was armed with a lead pencil; not even a fountain-pen. If it came to physical force, it was a blue look-out for the Babu. Fine, vigorous men, too; manly, open faces. One could not browbeat them, as if they were Bengalis. I began to be anxious about that Babu.

After breakfast, a cigarette. I drew it out as long as possible and considered. Oh, Indranath Babu, why are you not here, to warn me off shoals by your clucking? I wish you were, but, since you are not, I must go it alone.

So, my cigarette ended, — and I felt rather like a condemned man with his last cigar, at the end of which the proceedings are to culminate, we all went to the village grove, where the prisoner was brought, tightly bound, haggard, disheveled, wild-eyed. A Bengali, undoubtedly, but a very ill-used Bengali, physically speaking.

Suddenly I caught his eye. He was making signs. I went over to him, in the midst of his guard of sturdy spear-men.

He half-whispered, in English, —

'Sir! Do you not know me?' I looked closer. 'I am Okhoy Kumar Ganguli, pleader of your Honor's court.'

'Ah! Okhoy Babu!' He flashed back into my memory, as he had disappeared in a cloud of dust down the village road, on the day of the perjury case. With equal rapidity it flashed into my mind that if I wanted to get the Babu clear, I must show no sign of ever having seen him before. So I shook my head and turned away to the fine old graduate of Berhampore jail.

We took our seats in a circle in the grove, on stools of wicker-work shaped like dice-boxes. I recognized the pattern. We have them made on contract in the jail. Evidently the old headman had brought the arts back with him. I sat in the centre of a half-circle, made venerable, I hoped, by a big pith helmet. The old headman, whose name, I believe, was Soondra Manjee, sat at my right hand; the stalwart men with spears, gaudy in their peacock-feather crests, completed the half-circle. At its focus Okhoy Babu squatted on the earth, with a knot of spear-men about him. He was tightly bound and evidently galled by his thongs. I pitied Okhoy Babu. It remained to be seen whether I should not very soon have even better cause.

The women gathered closer, fine-looking, some of them, and not so cowed and abashed as Bengali women. Most of them had flowers in their hair. They had brass bracelets and rings, too, and bright-colored muslin *saris* — a long strip of cloth, draped into a skirt and bodice, that showed their fine, graceful, upstanding figures admirably.

But Okhoy Babu was not thinking of feminine beauty or adornments of Ashoka flowers, — at least, his face did not suggest it. It was grim earnest with him. I would do my best for Okhoy Babu, but I had my doubts.

We opened the proceedings. The old gentleman stood up and made a little speech in Santali. I guessed the subject: their exceeding good-luck in having caught a magistrate, albeit a very young one, whose presence would regularize their proceedings. I knew he was talking about me, as every one looked in my direction and the women smiled. The men were too dignified for that, but their big, childlike eyes spoke.

Then old Soondra Manjee turned to me and said, —

‘Your Honor, we are ready,’ in his best Bengali.

Okhoy Babu winced and shrank together. Evidently he was not ready at all.

‘So, as severely as I could, I asked, —

‘Of what is the prisoner guilty?’

‘Your Honor!’ Okhoy Babu began, in English. That would be fatal. So I said to him, in a tone that evidently went home, —

‘Don’t talk to me, you thundering idiot, if you wish to save your neck!’

Okhoy Babu sighed deeply, but had the wisdom to shut up.

So I asked again, —

‘Of what is the prisoner guilty?’

‘Your Honor,’ said the fine old Santali, with genuine moral indignation, ‘the Babu told a lie! He came to us, one month ago, hungry and sick. We sheltered him and fed him. After two days, he began to make mischief! There are the boundary stones; they mark the limit of our territory and the territory of the Bengalis. This Babu told us he would show us how to move the boundary stones — secretly, in the night — so as to enlarge our lands and double the size of our rice-fields. The Babu is a cheat and a liar, so we are, of course, going to kill him.’

Oh, tribe of honest men! I like those Santalis. And the fine Italian hand of my Okhoy Babu! He ran like a hare to

escape trial for perjury, in the matter of that cocoanut, date, jack, and so-on tree in the field of Hari Dass, and straightway set himself to seduce the blameless Santalis and lead them into guile.

Babu, for two or three minutes, I seriously considered saying, ‘Let the law take its course!’ Perhaps what checked me was the consideration of how you would squeal while you were being speared. At any rate British legalism won the day, and I determined to save you for a more regular tribunal.

How to do it, though? I thought first of trying to explain the English law, making clear to them that they would be guilty of murder and riot and dacoity and ever so many things. Then I thought of asserting the right of eminent domain over the Babu — of claiming him as my own peculiar prey. But I was pretty sure they would ask, ‘Will your Honor promise to kill him?’ And various considerations would prevent my doing that. To get him away by strategy just entered my mind, to leave it again instantly. I could not risk having these honest men hand down among their village traditions, that they had trusted a white man and that he had cheated them.

Then I noticed something curious enough, — but the nature of woman is inscrutable.

A singularly pretty girl, light-colored, with pretty eyes and quantities of glossy hair decked with crimson flowers, her lithe, graceful young body charmingly set off by the sari with its pattern of rose-colored twigs, had been edging closer to Okhoy Babu, and now, eluding the vigilance of the guards, she gave him a cocoanut shell of water, which he greedily drank, and, — oh, mysterious feminine heart! — she was patting his cheek. I began to see daylight.

The first thing was, to gain time. So



I made a quick decision and, rising, said in my best Bengali, —

‘The Babu is evidently a wicked man, and deserving of death. He has lied, and he has advised you to lie. But to-day is the seventh day of the moon’ — fortunately I had noticed the evening before — ‘and this is, therefore, an inauspicious day for you to put the Babu to death.’

That was true enough. Any day would be, for they would have to stand trial for murder, and very possibly hang for it. But they did not take my words in that sense. Indeed, they looked genuinely frightened. They were chock-full of superstition, and they had nearly killed a Babu — on the wrong day! They were genuinely glad that I had come. I saw that, and went on more confidently, —

‘Not before the tenth day will the time be auspicious. Therefore let the Babu be left bound in a hut, with none to keep him company, and let us wait until the auspicious day. Meanwhile, if the village wishes to hold a feast in honor of the Sahib, the Sahib will graciously be pleased to take part in it.’

The joy, the feasting, the rice-wine generously flowing, the wild song and dance — all this must go unrecorded. Babu Okhoy Kumar Ganguli was not present at the feast. He languished in his cell — that is, in a leaf hut at the jungle-edge of the village.

That night, after a long day’s revelry, the village slept well. All, that is,

excepting the Deputy Magistrate, who kept an alert ear, and, it would seem, that pretty girl with the crimson blossoms in her hair. Early in the night, the Deputy Magistrate, who was enjoying the moonlight, as the sentries snored over their fires, saw a lithe figure steal over to the prison-hut. Then there was silence, but for a faint sound of rending leaves; then the Deputy Magistrate went to his own hut, for matches, and smoked a philosophic cigarette. Then he went to sleep. . . .

Babu, I hope you have good legs and wind, for an hour after sunrise your inexplicable absence was discovered; the absence, too, of that pretty girl with the crimson flowers in her dark, glossy hair. I hope your legs and your wind are good, for, ten minutes after these discoveries, forty able-bodied Santalis, whose power of wind and limb was unquestionable, were on your trail, armed with boar-spears. And I think, that if they caught up with you, they would finish you without benefit of magistrate!

Shortly thereafter, I succeeded in scraping together half-a-dozen hoary-headed men, past the age for Babu-baiting, who consented to carry my palki, and, with sincere regret, I bade farewell to the Santal country; regret, in part, for that I had in fact contributed to deceive these honest men for such a one as Okhoy Babu, procurer of perjury. But not for the sake of Okhoy; for the honor of the law.

# NOSTALGIA

BY KATHARINE FULLERTON GEROULD

I HAVE not trod those burning sands,  
I have not plumbed those frozen seas;  
My palace was not made with hands,  
My sails are furled from every breeze.

I sit behind a curtained pane  
And gaze into a village street;  
Homeward, at eve, return again  
My indolent, untraveled feet.

But in the books you bring to me,  
I find strange places that I knew:  
Cathay or Ind or Muscovy,  
The Isles of Spice or Khatmandhu.

I close my eyes and call it back —  
The tedium of the caravan,  
The jackals howling on our track,  
The wile and sloth of savage man.

My homesickness was born with me  
Whom the ancestral walls enclose;  
But it is nice as memory,  
And chooses only what it knows.

And when the page divines aright,  
I do not shrink or find it far;  
But answer, as an exile might,  
‘That is my home, and there my star!’

## UNION PORTRAITS

### III. WILLIAM T. SHERMAN

BY GAMALIEL BRADFORD

#### I

It is curious to turn from the study of Thomas to the study of Sherman. Thomas instinctively hides himself. To get at his soul you have to watch keenly, to pick up fine threads of self-revelation in a waste of conventional formality and follow their light tissue with the closest care. Sherman turns himself inside out even in an official document. He wore his coat unbuttoned, and his heart also; exposed its inmost lining to all the winds of heaven — and all the eyes of curious reporters, whom he detested for seeing and recording what was there and what was not. This perpetual exposure is almost as baffling as Thomas's concealment, though in another fashion. We like a soul to be open, and clean, and wind-blown. But I am not sure that we like to see it always thrashing on the clothes-line.

'Typically American' is a loose term and gets looser every day. But Ropes and many others have applied it to Sherman, and with singular justice. Few figures of the war have more marked American characteristics than he. Lincoln is often instanced. But Lincoln had strange depths, even yet unexplored, which do not seem American at all. Grant was too quiet.

Sherman was never quiet, physically or mentally. Like so many Americans who do things, he had not robust

health. In 1846, on his way to California, he gave up smoking. 'The reason was, it hurt my breast. . . . The habit shall never be resumed.' It was resumed, and given up again, and inveterate, as the hurt was. But no hurt made flag that indefatigable, unfaltering, resistless energy. 'Blessed with a vitality that only yields to absolute death,' he says of himself. Assuredly he was so blessed. One who did not love him observed, 'With a clear idea of what he wanted and an unyielding determination to have it, he made himself and everybody around him uncomfortable, till his demands were gratified.'

His character was written all over him. The tall, spare, wiry figure, the fine-featured, wrinkle-netted face, expressed the man. He had auburn hair, and one lock of it behind would stick straight out when he was eager or excited. I never think of Sherman without seeing that lock.

His manner was even more expressive than his features. He was always in movement, striding up and down, when he talked, if possible; if not, moving head, or hands, or feet. When Horace Porter first went to him from Grant, he found Sherman in his slippers, reading a newspaper, and all through the conversation the newspaper was frantically twisted and one foot was in and out of its slipper perpetually. The general's talk was hurried,

vigorous, incisive, punctuated with strange, sharp, and uncouth gestures. 'In giving his instructions and orders,' says one acute observer, 'he will take a person by the shoulder and push him off as he talks, follow him to the door all the time talking and urging him away. His quick, restless manner almost invariably results in the confusion of the person whom he is thus instructing, but Sherman himself never gets confused. At the same time he never gets composed.'

As he was American in look and manner, so he was eminently American in the movement of his life. He himself writes, 'It does seem that nature for some wise purpose . . . does ordain that man shall migrate, clear out from the place of his birth.' He migrated, at any rate, like a bird or the thought of a poet. Born in Ohio, in 1820, he passed apparently a tranquil boyhood. But with youth his adventures began. From West Point he went to Florida, from Florida to South Carolina. Then came California, then New York, then New Orleans, California again, New York again, St. Louis, and again New Orleans. Remember that in those days the journey from New York to San Francisco was like a journey round the world at present.

Nor was all this divagation merely military. Sherman was soldier only in part. At other times he was banker, farmer, lawyer, president of a railroad, president of a college. Only heroic self-restraint saved him from being an artist. 'I have great love for painting and find that sometimes I am so fascinated that it amounts to pain to lay down the brush, placing me in doubt whether I had better stop now before it swallows all attention, to the neglect of all my duties, discard it altogether, or keep on. What would you advise?' Here is the first and last time he ever mentions painting.

After this twenty years' Odyssey, just at the beginning of the war, he gets a spell at home with Penelope and the budding Telemachus, and observes, — with a sigh, — 'I must try and allay this feeling of change and venture that has made me a wanderer. If possible I will settle down — fast and positive.'

The war comes. He rides and rages through Bull Run, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, like a comet through Georgia and the Carolinas, to the highest war can give him, and to peace. But he never settles down — never.

## II

Some men whose feet are thus tirelessly wandering, tread a very narrow region in their minds, just as others' minds rove widely while their feet are still. With Sherman there was incessant movement of both mind and body. He had the busiest imagination in all these various careers, saw all possibilities of chance and accident and endeavored to provide for them, turned over a dozen courses of action before he hit the one that would answer his purpose best. At the beginning of the war others tried to accomplish full results with half measures, could not stretch prevision to the scope of effort necessary to avert the immense train of damage and disaster. Sherman saw and foresaw everything, and because he predicted the vastness of the struggle and demanded means adequate to meet it, those in authority, and the press men whose imagination was always hugely busy at short range, decried and almost displaced him as a sheer, unbalanced lunatic.

All through the war this acute imagination of military possibility and necessity marked him more than almost any one. Sometimes, doubtless, it led him to curious extremes, as in his advice to Sheridan in November, 1864:

'I am satisfied, and have been all the time, that the problem of the war consists in the awful fact that the present class of men who rule the South must be killed outright rather than in the conquest of territory . . . therefore I shall expect you on any and all occasions to make bloody results.'

An imagination so vivid and energetic has its dangers. One is the misrepresentation of fact, especially in the past. Perhaps Sherman was careless in this matter. His attitude is partly indicated in his remark to a newspaper man who had written a sketch of him: 'You make more than a dozen mistakes of facts, which I need not correct, as I don't desire my biography till I am dead.' This is all very well, but if a man does not correct his biography while living, his chance of doing it later is limited.

Sherman's Memoirs have been bitterly attacked on the score of inaccuracy. 'His story is often widely at variance with the Official Records, and with every one's recollection, except his own,' says Colonel Stone; and Professor Royce comments thus on the Californian portion: 'In fact, not only antecedent probability, but sound testimony, is against General Sherman's memory, a memory which, for the rest, was hardly meant by the Creator for purely historical purposes, genial and amusing though its productions may be.'

The general's remark in the preface to the revised edition of the Memoirs — revised chiefly by the printing of protests in an appendix — is most happily characteristic. I am, he says in substance, writing my own memoirs, not those of other people.

As to this question of accuracy, however, it is essential not to overlook the testimony of Grant, who declared that Sherman was thoroughly accurate, that he always kept a diary, and that the

Memoirs were founded on that diary in all matters of fact.

Another serious danger of a too active imagination is that it may go far outside the province that belongs to it. This was certainly the tendency of Sherman's. Not content with giving sleepless hours to devising all sorts of schemes for the military destruction of the enemy, he ranged far into politics, conceived and ceaselessly suggested measures financial and political which would aid in bringing about the military result. Many other generals had this habit, just as many politicians contrived to win victories in a back corner of an office; but few whirled out of their proper sphere with such break-neck velocity as Sherman. He was always delivering huge screeds of political comment, oral or written, to the North, to the South, to soldiers, to civilians, to officials, to laymen.

Hear one of his wildest outbursts on the general conduct of the war. 'To secure the safety of the navigation of the Mississippi River I would slay millions. On that point I am not only insane, but mad. . . . For every bullet shot at a steam-boat, I would shoot a thousand 30-pounder Parrotts into even helpless towns on Red, Ouachita, Yazoo, or wherever a boat can float or soldier march.' Do you wonder that some thought the general a little unreliable?

Hear him again on the deserts of the South. 'To the petulant and persistent secessionist, why, death is mercy, and the quicker he or she is disposed of, the better. Satan and the rebel saints of Heaven were allowed a continued existence in hell merely to swell their just punishment. To such as would rebel against a government so mild and just as ours was in peace, a punishment equal would not be unjust.'

It is this abstract and imaginative fury, constantly suggestive of the doc-

trinaire idealists of the French Revolution, which makes Sherman appear decidedly at a disadvantage in his correspondence with Hood concerning the treatment of Atlanta, and again in his correspondence with Hardee before Savannah.

As to details of policy there is the same fertility of suggestion, the same imperious decisiveness. Finance? Are you short of currency? Use cotton. Tie it up in neat weighed bales, and it will at least be better than your Confederate shinplasters. The draft? The draft? Certainly enforce the draft. 'Unless you enact a law denying all citizens between the ages of 18 and 45 who do not enlist and serve three years faithfully, all right of suffrage, or to hold office after the war is over, you will have trouble.' Niggers? Now what can you do with Niggers? They are not fit for soldiers, they are not fit for citizens, they are just fit for labor that white men cannot do. 'I would not if I could abolish or modify slavery,' he wrote in December, 1859.

The influence of all this varied thinking was doubled by a really demonic power of expression. Sherman's dispatches became letters, his letters pamphlets. Some accuse him of loquacity. This is absurd. His style is vigorous, pointed, energetic as his person. His abundance of words, great as it is, is lame and impotent to the hurry of his thought. This is the real significance of his ludicrous remark, 'I am not much of a talker'; and again, 'Excuse so long a letter, which is very unusual from me.' Not much of a talker! Oh, ye gods! The point really is that he talked vastly much, but he could have talked vastly more. On the whole, I am glad that he did not.

Those at whom he launched these verbal whirlwinds did not always appreciate them, or profit. Men thought he talked too freely, — 'more than was

proper,' was the opinion of the judicious Villard. At the beginning of the war Halleck gave his subordinate a kind and helpful caution, warning him that his use of his tongue was, to say the least, indiscreet. What is most charming in this connection is Sherman's way of receiving such good counsel. He knows the danger. He will do all he can to avoid it. 'We as soldiers best fulfill our parts by minding our own business, and I will try to do that,' 'I will try and hold my tongue and pen and give my undivided attention to the military duties devolving on me.'

He might as well have tried to dam his beloved Mississippi. Listen to the comment of one excellent observer on the general's conversational proclivities: 'He must talk, quick, sharp, and yet not harshly, all the time making his odd gestures, which, no less than the intonation of his voice, serve to emphasize his language. He cannot bear a clog upon his thoughts nor an interruption to his language. He admits of no opposition. He overrides everything. He never hesitates at interrupting any one, but cannot bear to be interrupted himself.'

The most striking instance of Sherman's talking and writing tendency to digress into politics was his agreement with Johnston upon terms of peace at the close of the war. In his zeal to carry out his ideas of the public good the Union commander certainly exceeded the ordinary limits of military negotiation. It is equally true that Stanton and Halleck were unnecessarily rough and discourteous in disapproving of his arrangements. Nevertheless, their ill-judged harshness did not justify Sherman's violent outburst to his own subordinate, Logan. 'If such be the welcome the East gives to the West, we can but let them make war and fight it out themselves.'



## III

What I have written so far must not be held to imply that Sherman was a dreamer, a mere visionary, who lived in the clouds. His whole career, and his immense accomplishment, would make such a suggestion absurd. Rich and eager as his imagination was, it was always subject to the closest bonds of logic and reasoning. It was this that made his conclusions not only abundant, but positive. 'My opinions are all very positive,' he writes, 'and there is no reason why you should not know them.' To him, at any rate, they appeared to be based on arguments which he had examined and found irrefragable.

It is curious that some who knew him well have denied that he was a reasoner. Professor Boyd declared that he leaped to results by intuition, that he could not give reasons, and that his letters contained, not reasons, but conclusions. This seems to me a misapprehension. It was not that he could not give reasons, but that he would not. He was a soldier, a man of action. He could not stop to make plain his mental processes to a bungler like you or me. Paper would not suffice to hold his conclusions. How then should he bother with explaining the long and devious paths by which he came to them? His own view of his logical activity is delightful. 'I am too fast, but there are principles of government as sure to result from war as in law, religion or any moral science. Some prefer to jump to the conclusion by reason. Others prefer to follow developments by the slower and surer road of experience.' Even more delightful is his adjustment of the whole matter to the somewhat academic level of Professor Boyd: 'Never give reasons for what you think or do until you must. Maybe, after a while, a better reason will pop into your head.'

This blending of iron logic with vivid imagination is most characteristic of Sherman always. His imagination made him wonderfully, charmingly tolerant, up to a certain point, of the views of others, and even, where he had not concluded positively, distrustful of his own. He begs to be checked, if inclined to exceed proper authority. With winning self-criticism he assures Grant that 'Rosecrans and Burnside and Sherman would be ashamed of petty quarrels if you were behind and near them.' And what an admirable piece of analysis is his comparison of himself with Grant and McClelland. McClelland, he says, sees clearly what is near, but very little beyond. 'My style is the reverse. I am somewhat blind to what occurs near me, but have a clear perception of things and events remote. Grant possesses the happy medium, and it is for this reason I admire him.'

But if Sherman was broad-minded and gently tolerant up to a certain point, beyond that he ceased to be so, and then his energetic logic made him refuse all compromise. He was, if I may use the phrase, fiercely reasonable. Just because he saw so far and saw so clearly, it seemed to him that there could be nothing worth considering beyond the limits of his vision. To serve under him, when you shared his views, or when you trusted him wholly, must have been a joy; but it was surely purgatory when you disliked him and he disliked you. If he was once convinced that you were in the wrong, nothing too savage could be done to set you intellectually right, for your own good. In other words, as an officer of the Inquisition he would have been unmatched in ingenuity and in severity.

Probably the most amusing as well as the most instructive of his intolerances was his animosity toward news-

paper men. No working general on either side enjoyed them or permitted them more freedom than policy absolutely required. But Sherman detested them. It has been shrewdly pointed out that he was too much like them to love them, and that as a war correspondent he could probably have earned a much larger salary than as a general. It has been suggested, also, that his professed hatred of publicity arose from a desire to supply his own, which he was royally able to do.

Be this as it may, the general is never more entertaining than when speaking his mind about the press. Sometimes he lashes it with sarcasm. 'We have picked up the barges, and will save some provisions, but none of the reporters "floated." They were so deeply laden with weighty matter that they must have sunk. In the language of our Dutch captain, "What a pity for religion is this war!" but in our affliction we can console ourselves with the pious reflection that there are plenty more left of the same sort.' Sometimes he lectures it paternally and endeavors to put these children of the evil one into the right way. 'Now I am again in authority over you and you must heed my advice. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press, precious relics of former history, must not be construed too largely. You must print nothing that prejudices government, or excites envy, hatred, and malice in a community. Persons in authority must not be abused.'

Is not every word of that delicious? And for misbehavior he would in all cases exact the severest penalty. 'Even in peace times I would make every publisher liable in money for the truth of everything he prints.' Oh, stern idealist,

Hereafter in a better world than this  
I shall desire more love and knowledge of you.

As newspapers represented free

speech, and as free speech is inseparably bound up with democracy, Sherman's mistrust of popular government grew all through the war. Personally he was the most democratic of men. Also, he was convinced that one political organization must prevail over the whole United States. But as to the final character of that organization he was somewhat doubtful. 'This country must be united by the silken bonds of a generous and kindly Union if possible, or by the harsh steel bands of a despotism otherwise. Of course, we all prefer the former.' Of course he did prefer it. Still, the editors sometimes tried his patience. Once, when it was over-tried, he wrote, 'The rapid popular change almost makes me monarchist, and raises the question whether the self-interest of one man is not a safer criterion than the wild opinions of ignorant men.'

The nice combination of restless fancy with rigorous logic which we have been analyzing probably reached its climax in Sherman's career with the celebrated and dramatic march from Atlanta to the seaboard. Hardly any other general, North or South, would have conceived anything so unusual. Sober critics, at the time and since, have condemned it from the purely military point of view. If justifiable, its justification must be found in those larger political arguments which delighted its contriver. It was forged almost as a dream in that eager and fertile workshop from which dreams came so thickly. But the point is that, conceived as a dream, it was worked out with minutely reasoned care, so that in the end success attended almost every step. It was no dream to lead a hundred thousand men two hundred miles through a hostile country and bring them out in perfect fighting trim and with a confidence in their commander which had grown at every step they took.

## IV

So we see that, for all his visions and all his theories, Sherman was an intensely practical man. Dreams to him were simply rich possibilities of fact. Except as they could be realized, he took no interest in them. And he devoted himself to realizing them with all the masterful energy of his nature. 'I must have facts, knocks, and must go on.'

Everybody recognizes that he studied his troops closely, kept careful count of just what men he had and what sort of men, and the same for the enemy. It is remarkable that, when so many generals allowed their imaginations to run away with them in overestimating the number opposed, Sherman more often calculated under than over.

Again, he was notable as a provider. He figured his needs carefully and made everything yield to them. Tracks must be kept clear, trains must be kept running, non-combatants must be disregarded, even though high authority appealed for them. No difficulties were recognized and no excuses would serve. To a hesitating quartermaster the curt answer was, 'If you don't have my army supplied, and keep it supplied, we'll eat your mules up, sir — eat your mules up.'

In other matters of organization Sherman had the same instinct for system and disliked what interfered with it. He objected, as Thomas did, to the intrusion even of philanthropy into the sphere of his command: 'The sanitary and Christian Commissions are enough to eradicate all traces of Christianity out of our minds.' Yet, while he exacted absolute subordination from others, he was ready and eager to obey the orders of his superiors, even though he might not approve of them.

There is difference of opinion as to

the minuteness with which he planned for possible contingencies. Schofield thinks that in this regard he was neglectful of detail. Possibly. But the activity of his imagination led him to consider and reconsider all the essentials of accident. And it was rare that either circumstances or the enemy confronted him with a situation which he had not already taken into account, — in most cases with adequate precaution.

The greatest test of a general's practical ability is his skill in handling men. Perhaps others surpassed Sherman in this, but, considering his temperament, his success was wonderful. His greatest lack was patience. When things did not suit him, he could be very disagreeable, as with Hooker. On the other hand, he had three admirable qualities, sympathy, simplicity, sincerity. He could understand a man's difficulties. He could step right down from his dignity and take hold of them. He had no hesitation in telling you what he thought, and you knew it was exactly what he did think.

With his equals and superiors this frankness is especially fine. How genuine, how free from offense because of that genuineness, and how helpful, are his letters of advice and caution to Grant, who was large enough to take them as they were meant and profit by them. Those addressed indirectly to Buell are no less creditable, though perhaps not received in quite the same spirit.

With his own subordinates Sherman's human qualities were even more effective. The soldiers delighted in 'the old man's' brusqueness and oddities. 'Uncle Billy' was a quaint figure such as simple minds love to mock at and tell tales of. It is alleged that strict discipline was not always observed in Sherman's armies. If so, it was because the commander cared nothing for parade troops. He was too busy with

what was essential to bother with what was not. But if discipline means instant readiness to go when and where ordered, Sherman's men were disciplined enough. They had confidence in their chief. Even when he seemed to be leading them out into the darkness, away from all support and all communication, they never hesitated to follow. He said everything would be right, and they knew it would. What is more, they loved him. In spite of his wrinkled face and his harsh speech and his uncouth ways, they loved him, because they knew that he was honest and fearless, and thought more about them than he did about himself.

## V

Through all this discussion, the reader will constantly have appreciated what I meant by calling Sherman typically American. Though by profession and habit a soldier, in his union of the theoretical and practical he was essentially the man of business who is to-day everywhere the most prominent and characteristic American figure. Let us see how thoroughly the business quality entered into the various aspects of Sherman's career.

To begin with, he was a vast and tireless worker. 'His industry was prodigious,' says Grant. 'He worked all the time, and with an enthusiasm, a patience, and a good humor that gave him great power with his army.' He was no shirk, no man to throw on to others anything that he could do himself. On the contrary, if others failed him, he would do double. 'They have not sent me a single officer from Washington, and so engrossed are they with Missouri that they don't do us justice. The more necessity for us to strain every nerve.'

Again, fighting, with him, was rather a business than a pleasure. His per-

sonal courage was, of course, beyond question. But some have questioned whether, as a consequence of his imaginative and sensitive temperament, he was not somewhat less clear-headed and capable under the pressure of combat than when planning a battle or a campaign. General Howard asserts that 'his intense suggestive faculties seemed often to be impaired by the actual conflict.' On the other hand, Cox and Schofield both testify that where others grew excited Sherman grew cool, and that in the presence of immediate danger he dropped theoretical discussion and settled all difficulties with peremptory sternness. 'On the battlefields where he commands Sherman's nervous manner is toned down. He grates his teeth and his lips are closed more firmly, giving an expression of greater determination to his countenance.'

In any case, although he calls being at the head of a strong column of troops, in the execution of some task that requires brain, the highest pleasure of war, yet it is evident that to him fighting was chiefly a means to an end; in other words, a matter of business, to be carried on calmly, carefully, and intelligently as such. 'Neither of us,' he says of Grant and himself, 'naturally was a combative man.' In the same spirit, though infinitely careful of his troops, he viewed slaughter with indifference when the necessities of business required it. 'Tell Morgan,' he said, 'that we will lose 4000 men before we take Vicksburg, and we may as well lose them here as anywhere.'

The same businesslike tone appears in Sherman's attitude toward ambition and glory. Like every man who does things, he wished posterity to speak well of him, to speak highly of him, and he would have been the last to deny it. But he was singularly free from the petty vanities of show and

adulation which disfigure the biography of so many generals. As he rather affected a shabby appearance, so he rather affected an avoidance of newspaper notoriety. 'I never see my name in print without a feeling of contamination, and I will undertake to forego half of my salary, if the newspapers will ignore my name.' Even as regards more substantial recognition he was somewhat reluctant, not from undue modesty, for no one ever better gauged his own achievements, but because he feared that sudden exaltation meant a sudden fall. Early in his career he expressed his wish to remain in the background, and when promotion came his first feeling was that he had not yet deserved it. Few men on the road to distinction have expressed themselves more sensibly than he does in his admirable letter of advice to Buell. 'To us, with an angry, embittered enemy in front and all around us, it looks childish, foolish, yea, criminal — for sensible men to be away off to the rear, sitting in security, torturing their brains and writing on reams of foolscap to fill a gap which the future historian will dispose of by a very short, and maybe, an unimportant chapter, or even paragraph. . . . Like in a race, the end is all that is remembered by the great world.'

It is in this purely business instinct, the combining of theory with practice for a business purpose, that we must seek the explanation of the most curious problem in Sherman's career, his harsh and barbarous treatment of the invaded enemy. No man was by nature less cruel than he. No general expresses himself in the earlier part of the war more decidedly against plundering and vandalism. He urges upon his subordinates consideration for non-combatants: 'War at best is barbarism, but to involve all — children, women, old and helpless — is more than can

be justified.' He deplores the lack of discipline which makes possible the excesses of the soldiers. 'I am free to admit that we all deserve to be killed unless we can produce a state of discipline when such disgraceful acts cannot be committed unpunished.' He is even almost ready to resign his position, he feels the disgrace so keenly. 'The amount of burning, stealing, and plundering done by our army makes me ashamed of it. I would quit the service if I could, because I feel we are drifting to the worst sort of vandalism.'

Then he has an army of his own, marches straight into the South, and leaves a trail behind which makes him not only execrated by his enemies, but typical in modern warfare for destruction and plunder. And all just as a sheer matter of business. The war must be ended, and the way to end it was not merely to defeat armies in the field but to bring desolation and misery to the humblest homes of the Confederacy. He may not have said 'War is hell,' but assuredly he acted it. He may not have burned Columbia, but he did write officially, 'I should not hesitate to burn Savannah, Charleston, and Wilmington, or either of them, if the garrisons were needed.' And he summed up the whole bare naked theory in one tremendous passage, as characteristic of the man as of the methods he employed: 'Of necessity in war the commander on the spot is the judge, and may take your house, your fields, your everything, and turn you all out, helpless, to starve. It may be wrong, but that don't alter the case. In war you can't help yourselves, and the only possible remedy is to stop war . . . Our duty is not to build up; it is rather to destroy both the rebel army and whatever of wealth or property it has founded its boasted strength upon.'

As an admirable concrete illustration of this thoroughly businesslike frame



of mind, take the following little touch. At the bottom of a page of the Memoirs we read the solemn injunction, 'There should be no neglect of the dead.' Turn the page and we find out why: 'because it has a bad effect on the living.'

In enlarging on this fiercely practical element in Sherman I have not meant to give the impression that he was a mere machine man, without nerves or emotions. Quite the contrary was the case. He was all nerves, at least on the surface; for I have a shrewd suspicion that, as with so many Americans, the dance of the muscles was a helpful outlet for inward restlessness. To every emotional stimulus he responded with the utmost vivacity. A fair day almost distracts him from the rush of battle, and in a formal report he writes, 'The scene was enchanting; too beautiful to be disturbed by the harsh clamor of war; but the Chattahoochee lay beyond and I had to reach it.' On the other hand, when the news of South Carolina's secession came to him in New Orleans, he burst into tears.

Also, he was irritable, as every one admits, had sharp outbursts of temper when things went wrong. This appeared in many little matters as well as in the great historical scene when he showed his bitter, if justifiable, wrath against Stanton by refusing to take his hand before the eyes of the country and the world. As with his other faults, Sherman was quick to recognize this one, illustrating Grant's excellent comment on him, 'Sherman is impetuous, faulty, but he sees his faults as well as any man.' Speaking once of his companion in arms, McPherson, the general said, 'He is as good an officer as I am, is younger, and has a better temper.'

Again, as Sherman was irritable, so he was susceptible of depression and discouragement. The term melancholy, so applicable to Lincoln, has no significance here. Sherman's downheart-

edness is far better expressed by the very American word for a very American thing, — disgusted. His low spirits had always a perfectly tangible cause, and a moment's change in external circumstances could remove them. But while they lasted, they were very low indeed, and his expressive organization made them widely manifest. Read Villard's account of the behavior which led to the widespread belief that the general was insane. His fear as to the future of the Union was so great that it clung to him day and night like an obsession. 'He lived at the Galt House, occupying rooms on the ground floor. He paced by the hour up and down the corridor leading to them, smoking and obviously absorbed in oppressive thoughts. He did this to such an extent that it was generally noticed and remarked upon by the guests and employees of the hotel. His strange ways led to gossip, and it was soon whispered about that he was suffering from mental depression.'

For the internal view of these moods take a passage from Sherman's own letters on a slightly different occasion. 'My feelings prompted me to forbear and the consequence is my family and friends are almost cold to me, and they feel and say that I have failed at the critical moment of my life. It may be I am but a chip on the whirling tide of time, destined to be cast on the shore as a worthless weed.'

Then would come the rebound, and natural vivacity and gayety would amply justify the remark of one who knew him well, that, 'Of a happy nature himself, he strove to make all around him happy.' For laughter as a leisurely ornament of life Sherman had too little time. The humorous wrinkles were crossed and crowded out by wrinkles of care and passionate endeavor. But he had in a high degree the American gift of shrewd, witty words that either tickle



or sting. How apt is his description of Beauregard, 'bursting with French despair.' How merry is his account of a lawsuit he would wish to have conducted. 'I would give one hundred dollars to be free to take Levy's case — put St. Ange on the stand and make him describe his drive to Judge Boyce's and back — he first described the journey as enough to kill any horse, but now that his horse is lame he insists it was a sweet ride and not enough to hurt a colt. There is plenty of fun in the case.' How apt and merry both is his recommendation of some Negro troops to McPherson. Mark Twain might have written it. 'There are about one hundred Negroes fit for service enrolled under the venerable George Washington, who, mounted on a sprained horse, with his hat plumed with the ostrich feather, his full belly girt with a stout belt, from which hangs a stout cleaver, and followed by his trusty orderly on foot, makes an army on your flank that ought to give you every assurance of safety from that exposed quarter.'

The nerves which were so susceptible to comedy were also responsive to the pathos of life. Very little acquaintance with Sherman is needed to show that his imagination made him quickly aware of the sufferings of others and his energy hastened to relieve them. This is evident at all stages of his career, whether he was visiting the bedside of a sick cadet in his Southern college, or interfering to protect some poor widow from the misery his abstract theories of destruction had brought upon her. 'The poor woman is distracted and cannot rest. She will soon be as prostrate as her dying daughter. Either the army must move or she.'

And though neither fantastic nor morbid, Sherman was as sensitive in his conscientiousness as in his sympathy. Where he thought he had done injustice, he would not rest till he had made it

right. However his eager fancy might lead him into misstatements, no man was more scrupulous about telling the truth as he knew it. Above all, he was rigidly insistent on financial honesty. In commercial as well as in military pursuits, he would tolerate no transaction which had the slightest taint. Even such a trivial matter as sending home insignificant souvenirs troubled him. 'I could collect plenty of trophies but have always refrained and think it best I should. Others do collect trophies and send home, but I prefer not to do it.'

Upon what foundation of religion this strict morality was based is a curious study. Considering his freedom of expression in other respects, there are singularly few religious references in Sherman's letters. If he was at all lacking in positive beliefs, such uncertainty was at any rate not of the rather abject type so exquisitely mocked by Voltaire in his story of the Swiss captain who withdrew into a thicket before battle and prayed, 'O my God, if there is a God, please save my soul, if I have a soul.' It is probable, however, from occasional allusions to the matter, that Sherman cherished some broad religious beliefs rather positively, but that his essential effort was to forward the cause of good in the world and to love his fellow men. In other words, here again his religion was that of millions of other honest, earnest, hard-working Americans: that is, a religion made up, in about equal parts, of reverence and indifference, and perhaps well expressed in the phrase of one of them, 'I am doing my work, let God do his.'

#### VI

To complete the picture it will be well to point out some defects, or shall we say limitations, of this vital, intricate, most fascinating character, though

these limitations are hard to seize and still harder to define.

To begin with, you feel a little excess of purpose in his life. Purpose is a splendid thing, a thoroughly American thing; it moves the world like the lever of Archimedes. But purpose for breakfast, luncheon, and dinner does grow wearisome. A day of mere quiet is good for every one. I do not believe Sherman ever had an hour. To live with him must have been like living with a bumble-bee.

Then I feel that Sherman had not depth quite in proportion to his ample breadth and variety. There were elements in life that he never touched. The most striking illustration of this is in his letters. I read his official correspondence and I was astonished at the freedom and ease with which the man poured forth his thoughts and feelings on matters that others were inclined to treat merely formally. I said to myself, what a treasure of self-revelation in things of the soul his personal letters will be. Well, when I turned to the personal letters, they added little or nothing to the official. To his brother and his wife he writes exactly as to a subordinate, or a department official, or an editor. He says all he has to say to everybody and anybody. It will be urged that only those portions of his private correspondence which bear on public interests have been published. But that is not the point. It is what he does write that counts, not what he does not. His letters to the girl he loved would make excellent weekly correspondence for a newspaper. Take a curious instance. He begins an affectionate letter to his daughter. Before he has written a page, he drifts into political discussion and concludes that he is writing to the mother, not to the daughter at all.

Another odd case of this living for publicity is Sherman's insertion in his

Memoirs of the letter referring to his son Willie's death. The paper in itself is touching. The father's affection for his son, as for all his family, is evidently strong and true. But the introduction of such a letter in such a way would have been utterly impossible for a nature like that of Thomas.

And since I have mentioned Thomas, let me refer to still another matter which will help to make plain the subtle point I am elucidating. To both Thomas and Lee, grateful fellow citizens made offer of a house purchased by subscription. Both Thomas and Lee refused, requesting that the money might be given to poor and suffering soldiers. A similar offer was suggested for Sherman. Though unwilling to take anything for himself, he was ready to accept it for his family, provided it was accompanied with bonds sufficient to pay the taxes. There was nothing in the least discreditable about this, nothing even indelicate. It may be that the nicety of Thomas was overstrained. But the difference of attitude illustrates exactly what I am attempting to analyze.

May we use the painter's phrase, and say that Sherman's character lacked atmosphere, lacked that something of depth and mystery which makes the indescribable, inexhaustible charm of Lincoln? Sherman is like one of our clear, blue January days, with a fresh north wind. It stimulates you. It inspires you. But crisp, vivid, intoxicating as it is, it seems to me that too prolonged enjoyment of such weather would dry my soul till the vague fragrance of immortality was all gone out of it.

Yet in his defects, as in his excellences, he was, we may repeat, a typical American. Perhaps I cannot better emphasize the absurdity of that word 'typical,' than by expressing the wish that there were many more Americans like him.

# TELEPHONE

BY JOSEPH HUSBAND

THERE was a continuous sound of many voices; a steady cadence in which no individual note dominated; a hundred women's voices incessantly repeating brief sentences with a rising inflection at the end, each sentence lost in the continuous tumult of sound. In a long line, perched on high stools, they sat before the black panels which rose behind their narrow desk. Into the transmitters — hung from their necks — they articulated their strange confused chorus. And apparently without relation to the words they uttered, a hundred pairs of hands reached back and forth across the panels, weaving interminably a never-to-be-completed pattern on its finely checkered face.

On the panels a thousand little lights blinked white and disappeared. Tiny sparks of ruby and green flashed and were gone. Untiring, the white stars flickered in and out, and behind them raced the tireless hands, weaving a strange pattern with the long green cords. And unbroken, unintelligible, the murmur of the girls' voices vibrated unceasingly.

Outside, under the gray sky of a rainy day, the life of the city was at the flood. Over slim wires, buried in conduits below the trampled street, or high strung, swinging in the rising wind, the voices of a thousand people told their thousand messages to waiting ears. A passing thought, perhaps, that you would have me hear; with a single movement you lift the transmitter from the hook beside you; white flashes the tiny lamp on the black panel; a

girl's hand sweeps across the board and plugs in the connection. Space, useless, is swept aside; though actual miles may intervene I am suddenly beside you.

Messages of business that can make or ruin, death, love, infidelity, appeal! Automatically, surely, she weaves back and forth across the panels. Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, — Parcae of the switch-board!

Here is the throbbing pulse of the city bared and visible. Night is over; with rapidly increasing frequency the flashing drops of light indicate that the activity of day has begun. Every action must be expressed in words, and, bared and concentrated, that word-current of the city rises like a gathering wave. From ten in the morning to five minutes after, the tide is at the flood. The flicker of lights is dazzling; the girls' hands race dizzily behind their flashing summons. Business is at its height. But here on another row of panels the occasional flash of lights offers a curious contrast: this is a panel for a part of the residence district; from seven to eight in the evening its lights will glow with activity. Then business is over and the downtown panels will be darkened. Here is a visual shifting of scene and interest. Work over, the social engagements are made, and business is forgotten. There is a friendly gossiping along the wires.

Night has come, and a dozen girls watch the long, deserted boards. Like the occasional glimmer of a cab lamp late upon the street, the signals, one by one, flash and are gone. The world is

fast asleep. Far down at the end of the panel a signal brightens. 'Number please?' — 'Police!' It was a woman's voice. From the card index 'Central' picks out the street address which corresponds to the number, and the nearest station is advised of the call. Had the woman no time to finish her message? There is another light burning on the panel. Already she is forgotten and the slim hands are making another connection. Police or doctor, — the night calls are laden with portent.

What interests the world to-day? Does something disturb the minds of men? The flashing panels answer. As surely as the sun will rise to-morrow will the increased throb of light betray the fevered interest of mankind. Five o'clock! usually there is a slacking up, but not to-day. Heavier than at the busiest five minutes in the whole twenty-four hours, come the calls for connections. Did the White Sox win their game? It is the final of the series. Who was elected? Politics to-day runs high. War? The troops are off; marines have landed! Strikes, fires, or the sinking ship; the racing hands weave faster; the steady hum of the girls' voices accelerates almost imperceptibly. Here beats the pulse upon the surface; they know its normal rise and fall; by its fevered beat they can read diversion or disaster.

Back over the years the superintendent recalled the various events which

had been dramatically visualized on the switch-board panels. Twelve years ago, about; the panels were fewer then. It was almost five o'clock in the afternoon; in a quarter of an hour the day operators would be leaving, tired from their long labor at the board. The lights were flashing slowly, perfectly recording the slackened beat of business. Five minutes to five, — a wave of white light seemed to flare across the downtown panels, suddenly, unexpectedly. Ignorant of the cause, the girls plugged in the desired connections. Every one seemed to be calling out to the residence sections. For a brief minute there was a pause — The flood of light was gone as abruptly as it had come. Then like a flame across the residence panels gleamed the signals, calling back, a hundredfold, back to the stores and offices.

The men had heard first the terrible rumor. Their messages across the wires to their homes had sought the answer to their first thought that she, that they, were safe. And then back, in anguished women's voices, came frantic appeals for names of the missing. For long hours through the night the white-faced girls held to their posts; and in their tired eyes the signals burned feverishly. That night Chicago shuddered in its grief, — for in the flames of the Iroquois Theatre, at a holiday matinée, had gone out the lives of countless women, men, and little children.

# THE CRITICS OF THE COLLEGE

BY HENRY S. PRITCHETT

'I AM nothing, if not critical,' said Iago of himself. His phrase aptly describes a tendency of our day. We live in a social order self-conscious and critical.

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin —  
That all with one consent praise newborn gawds,  
Though they are made and moulded of things  
past.

This critical spirit — this touch of nature which makes the whole world kin — has characterized every complex civilization. Even in their decay, Greece and Rome developed their critics — not only keen, but wise. In our day the critics are perhaps no wiser, but they are more numerous. In a people given over, as ours is, to the daily paper and to the uplift magazine, the touch of nature is intensified. We are a nation of critics.

Uncomfortable as this is for all of us who live in glass houses, we dare not forget that the ability to learn from just criticism is perhaps the highest test of civilization. Individual success is measured by it; the progress of an institution or a state is conditioned upon the capacity to avail itself of criticism.

It must be confessed that few attain that serene plane where the critic is really welcome. Charm he never so wisely, your critic is generally an Ahithophel. Those who most need to heed him call him academic, and after that nobody pays any further attention to what he says. One does not need a long memory to recall the rise of criticism of our railway management. The critics

objected to rebates; to railway politics; to discrimination between shippers. They were laughed at as academic. To-day these abuses are being stamped out by legislative and executive action far more drastic than anything that these academic critics ever dreamed of. Who knows but that some future president may appoint an interstate college commission whose function it shall be to squeeze the water out of the colleges, just as President Wilson is preparing to squeeze it out of the other trusts?

For it is inevitable that in an age so critical our chief agency of higher education should come in for its full share of censure. Furthermore, the critics assume (of course unreasonably) that the college, as an exponent of our highest intelligence, will receive these censures with a sweet reasonableness and will promptly bring forth fruits of reform.

Whatever be the origin of this criticism of the college, though much of it be wide of the mark and some of it unjust, it still remains true that in no way can the college justify itself more completely than by meeting such criticism in good temper, by dealing with it patiently and honestly; and while it discards the censures of the carping, by availing itself of whatsoever wisdom such criticism offers.

## I

Who are the critics of the college, and what are they saying about it?

To make a catalogue of the critics and their complaints would outrun the limit of a magazine. Everything about the college is under the fire of the critics — its government and administration, its teaching, its financial conduct, its ideals of social life, its right to exist at all. These criticisms run into details so varied as to confuse the general reader, and for that matter the student of education. Is it possible so to classify them under a few heads as to show in the first place the points of view of the critics, and secondly to indicate the nature and sweep of their criticisms? It is this which I have attempted to do.

The first difficulty which one meets in such an effort arises out of the incongruities of our educational situation. In our country the very name college has no definite meaning.

In the United States there are approximately nine hundred institutions called colleges and empowered to grant degrees. Illinois, Iowa, Ohio, and Pennsylvania have more than forty each; Georgia, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, more than thirty each. Iowa has one such degree-granting college for each 50,000 of her inhabitants, Ohio one for each 100,000, Massachusetts one for each 200,000, and New York one for each 300,000. England has one degree-granting institution for every three millions.

These establishments bearing the name college differ so widely in what they undertake to do and in the methods by which they undertake to do it, that they cannot be discussed as if they belonged to a homogeneous group. Some of them are real-estate ventures. A very large proportion are preparatory schools in whole or in part. The majority of them have vague and uncertain relations to the system of schools in their region.

Many attempts have been made to simplify this situation. The suggestion most often put forward is that colleges should be segregated into groups comparable with each other, as the American Medical Association classifies the medical schools, so that the public may know whether a given institution is a No. 1 college, a No. 2 college, or a No. 3 college, just as it now thinks of the medical schools as belonging to Class A, B, or C. A study intended to provide an approximate grouping of colleges was prepared a few years ago in the office of the United States Commissioner of Education, but under the gentle pressure of politics the results have never been allowed to reach the public eye.

There are, in truth, no specific marks by which colleges can be sharply divided into classes, and this notwithstanding the fact that many things about a college can be sharply and definitely appraised. For example, it is quite possible to determine whether a given college maintains a wholesome and fruitful relation to the public-school system, whether it has a reasonable and honestly enforced system of admission to its classes, whether it offers courses which are of high quality given by good teachers, whether its laboratories and its physical equipment are of a generous and suitable kind.

All this does not enable one to separate colleges into sharply divided classes. These are externals. It is not so easy to determine in what way are defined the intellectual and moral forces which ought to form the real college. Take a single matter, that of entrance requirements. An arbitrary standard of comparison in this matter cannot be instituted. A college having a lower standard of entrance requirements than another may be maintaining a much better relation to the public-



school system; it may be proceeding with far greater honesty; it may be exercising a much stronger influence for education and enlightenment than another whose standards of admission are artificially higher. In other words, nearly all these matters of which we talk so much — such as admission requirements, courses of study, laboratory equipment — are relative, not absolute.

Are there any absolute criteria upon which colleges may be classified?

There probably are not; and if there were, so long as the use of such criteria is affected by the personal equation of the man who applies them, there is nothing definitive in the conclusions. There is no sure method by which the college goats may be separated from the college sheep. Like all human institutions, however, the things which differentiate colleges most surely from one another are not complex intellectual qualities, but rather the fundamental moral ones. Colleges can be classified more accurately upon a comparison of their relative honesty than upon the basis of their relative intellectuality.

To be convinced of this one needs to visit many colleges. He must be able to think in terms of education in the nation rather than in terms of the aspirations of his own particular college; he must visualize education as one thing from elementary school to university, not as a series of unconnected things. When he has had this experience he will come, slowly it may be, but none the less surely, to the conclusion that the test applied to banks and churches and all other human agencies — the test of common honesty — is on the whole the most fair and the most applicable in any attempt to differentiate among colleges.

Not only is this method of comparing colleges fair and just, but the col-

leges furnish the means for its universal application. Every college sets before the public a statement of its offerings, in the form of an annual catalogue. If one will take the time and labor and expense (for it is at once a time-consuming, laborious, and expensive process) to compare the offerings of a number of colleges as presented in their catalogues with the actual fulfillment of these claims as carried out on the college campus, he will conclude that an honest catalogue is the noblest work of a college and the surest mark of college virtue.

Perhaps the college catalogue is nowhere so misleading as in its references to what President Wilson once called the side shows. Many colleges lend the shelter of their charters to various technical or professional schools which they neither support nor control, such as conservatories of music, commercial schools, medical schools, engineering schools, and graduate schools. Many a good college which guards its bachelor-of-arts degree with watchful care will, without the quiver of an eyelash, shelter a weak engineering school or a commercial medical school of the lowest type. The tenderest part of the college conscience lies apparently in the bachelor-of-arts course, and the most callous in the medical course.

There are few colleges which have not felt the effect of the universal scramble for numbers, few which have not become in greater or less measure agencies of promotion, few which do not participate, in some degree at least, in our national tendency to superficiality; but on the whole one may with some fair degree of justice divide these 900 colleges into two groups — those which publish catalogues measurably honest and those which do not. Now the criticisms which I have undertaken to summarize are those which are directed at the first group. This simpli-

fies the matter enormously. Not only do we get rid at one stroke of the great mass of material, but we reduce the criticisms to matters of large college policy instead of matters of detail. With regard to the second group one may only reflect, 'If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?'

And now, having concluded this long introduction, let us turn to our critics and their criticisms.

## II

The serious critics of the college fall into three groups: the college teachers, students of the social order, and the business men. To state the matter in a different way, the college is being criticized to-day from three points of view: that of the college teacher, that of the social reformer, and that of the business man.

Of these the college teacher is the most severe, and no other critic has so long a bill of indictment or one containing so many specifications. His charges may be reduced to something like the following. The college, as it is conducted to-day, provides intellectual offerings of great variety and of high intrinsic value, but fails to create an atmosphere in which these opportunities appeal to students. Good courses, good teachers, unequaled equipment, characterize the modern American college; a rare table is spread for the student, but there is no appetite for the feast. Scholarly enthusiasm among undergraduates is absent save in rare cases, and scholarly attainment commands no reward and little attention. The college has become a place where other things than intellectual power count.

The reasons for this state of affairs are stated by the teachers to be these. Colleges, they say, are ruled by presi-

dents and college boards having little interest in the ideals of the teacher and little sympathy for them. Rarely is the president himself a teacher. The president and the board are swayed by the all-devouring lust for numbers, and everything is sacrificed to that end. To maintain such numbers the standards are lowered, examinations are made easy, discipline is softened. In consequence, complains the college professor, other interests than intellectual ones absorb the minds of the college community.

The most injurious of these he believes to be intercollegiate athletics, whose overshadowing importance has affected not only the intellectual life, but the moral and social life as well, and has gone far to increase the scale of expenditures of the college boy. Only a board of trustees and a college president out of sympathy with the ideals of the true college would tolerate this situation, says the college teacher, and lays the blame in the main on the promoter president.

The remedy which the college teacher proposes for all this is to reorganize the college government: to create a small board of trustees in the place of the present large one, composed of men of college training whose function shall be primarily to find the ways and means; to appoint a president who shall be rather an intellectual leader than an administrator and promoter; and to turn over to the faculty the government of the college in such measure as shall enable its members to carry out their ideals of intellectual and moral standards and to maintain what they believe to be the true purposes of the college. If the college is turned over to us, say the teachers, we will make it once more a centre of intellectual life, not a promotion agency or an athletic training-ground.

The criticisms directed against the

college from the point of view of the social reformer run along two lines. One has to do with the ideal of democracy and the other with that of religion. It is impossible to discuss one without the other. There is a strong tendency in the college, say these critics, to forget that ideal of democracy which we call American, to segregate rich and poor into different groups, to increase class distinctions in our society rather than to diminish them, to make the groups of students who attend the colleges rather more conscious of class than less so.

Another group of social reformers insists that the college, which was twenty-five years ago distinctly a religious agency with a definite religious atmosphere, has become, if not irreligious, at least unreligious; that there exists in few colleges an active religious spirit such as makes itself felt upon any student who enters the college circle. On account of these two changes, the reformers say, the colleges are accentuating the tendency of the country away from democratic and away from religious ideals.

The third criticism comes from the business world, and is directed both against the college as an organization and against the quality of the product which the college turns out. As an organization, say the business men, the college is expensive, uncritical of its own processes, and grows continually by accretion. Departments, studies, and new divisions are added; nothing is ever subtracted. As an organization, the business man claims, the college never receives the critical administrative examination to which all other organizations are compelled to submit. While a newly started college may therefore, they say, be soundly organized, all colleges become after a greater or less time ill organized and expensive beyond a reasonable limit. In the sec-

ond place, say the business men, notwithstanding the very great expenditures of the college, the men it turns out are on the whole ill-trained, are able to do nothing well, as a class are not fond of work, and need in most cases a thorough breaking-in and additional discipline before they are available for serious occupations. The college, therefore, they say, is not only poorly organized and inordinately expensive, but unsuccessful in what it undertakes to do; and it makes no serious effort to remedy these obvious defects.

### III

How far are these criticisms justified?

This question I do not undertake to answer. The Carnegie Foundation, as is well known, exercises but a modest function in educational criticism. I have endeavored rather to classify the criticisms and to reduce them to some form in which they may be applicable to groups of colleges and to large policies.

It is of small value to prove that this or that study is being ill-taught. No outside critic can better such details. The criticisms which are here brought together are fundamental. They are directed at the organization and the government of every college. If they are true criticisms, they are worthy of the very closest attention on the part of those who govern colleges and of those who teach in them; and again I venture to recall the fact that the ability to make use of intelligent criticism is the surest mark of a high order of civilization.

I venture only to call attention briefly to the source of the criticisms themselves, and the claims which these various groups have upon the attention of college trustees, of college presidents, and of college faculties.

That the criticism of the college teacher is in large measure deserved there can be small doubt on the part of any one who cares to know the facts. The rage for numbers, the hot pursuit of gifts, the extraordinary demoralization due to intercollegiate athletics, are all factors in bringing about the situation of which the teacher complains and in which he himself is a factor. The indictment he brings against the government of the colleges is in a very large number of cases true. Outside of a few of the older colleges, governing boards are unwieldy in size, and their members are selected generally upon material grounds. It is entirely natural that such boards should choose for president a promoter rather than a scholar. The lack of a capable governing board is to-day perhaps the greatest weakness in our college organization, and it is the point at which reform must begin if the evils which are now recognized and admitted are to be corrected.

Whether the remedy which the teacher puts forward, that the governance of the college be handed over to the faculty, will solve these difficulties is another question. I have not yet encountered a teacher critic who favored the revision or even the scrutiny of his own work or his own budget.

The distortion of our present college relations produces upon the mind of a European visitor an effect of which we are seldom conscious. We have gradually grown accustomed to a situation in which athletics overshadows all else. To the European this discovery comes with something of a shock. A distinguished teacher and jurist recently visited a number of our universities in a study of legal education. His dismay and astonishment at the overpowering rôle of college athletics were complete, and he expressed the naïve hope that in some way the candidates for law might

get their pre-legal education without being exposed to the demoralizing atmosphere of the college!

The charge that the college is undemocratic and unreligious has never seemed to me to have the weight which certain reformers attach to it. Our American colleges, even the older and richer ones, still remain wholesome, democratic centres of student life. There are few places in the world where a human being finds himself in more sincere relations.

My own experience makes me suspect that, in general, the reformer underestimates the capacity of the American college student for serious things. The American youth is strongly inclined to pursue heartily those things which represent in the society in which he lives the prizes of life. He throws himself into athletics with such vigor because, on the whole, in the present college régime it seems the most important thing to do, the thing which really demands enthusiasm and devotion and hard work, the thing which brings recognition and reward.

As for the religious side of student life, that reflects the prevailing attitude of the American people, with this difference. The college student is going through an experience in which he is learning to place growing emphasis upon intellectual sincerity. At such a period in the development of any human being the forms of religion are sure to be looked at critically, but there has never been a time in our history when the college student was more ready to take kindly to a simple, straightforward conception of religion, or when he was more ready to accept the ideal of religious service and of unselfish devotion. The tendencies of the college life still seem to me to be democratic, and if the college boy does sometimes put his devotion and his effort into the wrong thing, it is because he

believes, in the environment in which he lives, that thing to be of most importance.

Concerning the complaint of the business man, what I have to say has to do, not with the accuracy of his charge, but with the point of view from which it comes.

Two reasons have combined in the last two decades to make business men more critical of the college. The first lies in the fact that only within the last twenty-five years has the business man's son, as a rule, gone to college; and business men are now beginning to test in great numbers in the records of their own sons the result of present-day college training. It is very difficult to convince an energetic, alert, driving business man that the college is a fruitful agency in education when his sons come home lacking serious purpose, deficient in the elements of an education, unable to write a good letter, and utterly uninterested in the details or the development of business. The son who comes out of college a failure is to the business man an *argumentum ad hominem* hard to overcome.

A second reason for the accentuation of criticism from business men is found in the systematic exploitation of business men by the colleges. The business world has begun to feel that it is giving so much money to support the colleges that it has a right to know how the money is spent and what results from it.

We read in the daily papers half-humorous allusions to the college president as a beggar, but few appreciate how large a business college-begging has become. It is a business; and it has come to be prosecuted in the most systematic and persistent way. The amount of money annually 'lifted' in cities like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and St. Louis, as the result of these systematic and continu-

ous efforts, aggregates many millions. When a new college is organized in any part of the United States, the first move is to send an agent — generally the president, sometimes a salaried solicitor — to canvass first the Eastern cities, then the near-by cities. In New York the business men have for the last twenty years subscribed to nearly all such efforts as a matter of course. It has been assumed that any college was necessarily a good thing to help. The business man has had no means of scrutinizing these efforts. He gives as the Lord sends his rain, to the just and to the unjust. The total which he contributes is enormous.

The applications made to these men would in many cases not bear the simplest scrutiny. The causes which they represent vary from actual frauds to the most sincere and praiseworthy educational efforts. The amount of fraud connected with the business of soliciting money for colleges will astonish any one who has not looked into it. There are enterprises in this country bearing the name college or university which have never taught a class, which have not a single college building, but which have for years collected money from a confiding public.

Such cases are, of course, extreme. Nearly always the college beggar is sincere in the belief that his institution represents a real cause. I have rarely found an educational enterprise whose promoters did not believe that it represented an unusual and unique opportunity. The most unsanitary and impossible medical school persuades itself that students are somehow better off with it than they would be under better conditions.

Some years ago the collector for a small institution, a college in name only, came to me and suggested that if I would give him a recommendation for his college, he thought he could collect



a large sum of money from some charitably inclined men and women of New York. My reply was that, in my judgment, his institution was in no position to solicit such aid. In the first place, it was not a college; in the second place, it was essentially a proprietary institution; in the third place, it was engaged in demoralizing the public-school system of the state in which it stood. For all these reasons I declined to be a factor in the situation. Three weeks later he called with the utmost good nature, merely to say good-bye, and as he left, he added, 'I got the money all right.'

It is the realization of these two things which has made the business men more critical toward the college. First, they have been conscious of many failures which touch them closely. In the second place, they have become more and more sensitive to the fact that they are contributing at an enormously increasing rate to institutions of whose merit they begin to have serious doubts.

The charge which the business man makes against the college is practically that of inefficiency. The word has a very offensive sound in the ears of the college man. I am creditably informed that in some college faculties the word efficient is no longer considered fit for decent society.

This feeling on the part of the college professor is readily understood. The word efficiency has been overworked and badly applied. It is perfectly true that one cannot gauge the work and cost of an educational agency by the hard-and-fast tests of business. No one has seriously proposed to do this save a few extraordinary state officers. In one state a board was at one time appointed to test the efficiency of every teacher. The absurdity of the proposal was enough to dispose of it.

This crude use of the term has,

however, been no justification for the extreme tenderness of many college professors and presidents. College professors are human and colleges are human institutions. Selfishness and waste may flourish in them as in other organizations. What the business man has said in criticism of them is almost equivalent to what the college professor himself has said. It is simply expressed in terms of business vernacular. There are in our country to-day institutions which spend annually larger sums than any single institution of learning ever spent in the previous history of the world.

These vast sums have been used at times selfishly. The college tends to grow all the time by accretion. It has not set itself to study its own organization and improvement. What the business man really means to say in his charge of inefficiency is that the college president and the college professor, instead of continually asking more money, instead of always urging the needs of this department or that, should seriously set themselves to examine what they are doing with the money generously supplied them in the last quarter century.

After all, this suggestion is not very far from that which is implied in the criticism of the college teacher. It is not that the teacher or the college shall be judged by impossible materialistic criteria, but that the college make its own examination and that there should be some sort of relation between the vast endowments of the colleges and the work which they actually perform.

#### IV

How far do these criticisms apply to the women's colleges?

I think it may be fairly said that the women's colleges are not open to exactly the same sort of criticism as men's



colleges. First of all, they have not shared to the same degree the flood of money which has gone to the older men's colleges; secondly, intercollegiate athletics has certainly not distorted their ideals of college life; and finally, it will be admitted that the young woman in such a college takes her work on the average more seriously and more conscientiously than her brother who goes to Harvard or Yale or Princeton.

There is a feeling that, notwithstanding her greater seriousness and more conscientious attitude toward study, the college girl does not get quite so much out of college as her brother. The youth who goes to college does not cut himself off during these four years from participation in the social order. Sometimes he sees much more of the fascinating young women of the college town than he had ever seen of those at home in his previous history. As a rule, he comes out of college with what might be called a more normal social experience than his sister who goes to a woman's college.

Whether justly or unjustly, the college world believes that the woman's college is a somewhat secluded institution separated from other social life, and that on the whole the young woman in such a college gets more study, but less development as a member of society than falls to the lot of the average youth.

It is my pleasant duty now and again to attend a commencement in one of the old-time colleges for women. They exist now only in remote parts of our country. The curriculum would be beneath contempt from the standpoint of the modern woman's college. It has scarcely begun to have psychology, and every one understands what a rudimentary stage that signifies. Yet I confess that there is something very charming about these old-time schools; and while

the girls lack psychology, they seem to know a deal about other matters. I have noticed that invariably such colleges are placed conveniently near a man's college or a military academy or some similar institution; and there are nearly always interesting goings on between these two. They have a social life in common, which adds spice to the chapters on psychology. I have wondered sometimes whether, after all, this arrangement did not make for a social education that looked toward charm and consideration for others and a knowledge of human nature; and in this sinful world charm and a knowledge of human nature serve many good ends.

A notable opportunity is offered at Bryn Mawr for such reciprocity. At its door stands one of the best American colleges. What a charming arrangement it would be if there were some social interchange between Bryn Mawr and Haverford! It seems an odd social conception which permits them to sit side by side year in and year out and take no notice of each other's existence. Of course, the fact that both these colleges are under the auspices of the same body of Christians makes an additional difficulty in any social *rapprochement*; but, after all, this might not prove an insuperable obstacle. What delightful opportunities are available for Barnard and Radcliffe!

I venture a single word more with regard to all these criticisms. All that such criticisms can do is to point the way by which those who are charged with the responsibility may bring about reforms. One can at least say that these criticisms call for a sincere self-examination on the part of the colleges, a self-examination on the part not only of those who teach, but of those who govern — a self-examination in which the trustees shall make clear to themselves their own function and the fit-

ness of their organization to perform this function; in which the president shall make clear to himself his own duty and his own relations; and in which the members of the faculty shall shoulder honestly the actual problems of their teaching, shall squarely take the responsibility for the use of the large sums of money now entrusted to them, and shall sincerely undertake to answer the question whether or not the responsibility for the present failings of the college does not rest partly with them.

To one whose work day by day brings him in contact not only with many colleges, but with many business men, with many social workers, there is a feature of the whole college situation which always brings a reassurance of comfort and of confidence.

Notwithstanding the weaknesses of the college to-day, notwithstanding the fact that many a youth comes away from it injured for life rather than

helped, notwithstanding the fact that it has not yet resolutely faced the present-day problems, the fact still remains that it is the best agency society has yet devised for the training of leaders; and I apprehend that this remains true largely for the reason that, notwithstanding all these weaknesses, the youth during his college life is under the sway of ideals which make him for all the rest of his life — in part, at least — an idealist. These ideals are not always the highest. In too many cases the boy gets them from the training coach rather than from the teacher, from an obscure instructor rather than from an experienced professor, from the college treasurer rather than from the college president; but nevertheless they express devotion, service, unselfishness, patriotism. It is because the college is still a place in which ideals grow that the college remains the most fruitful training place for the world's leaders.

# POSSESSING PRUDENCE

BY AMY WENTWORTH STONE

## I

'A LIE's an abomination unto the Lord a hundred and twenty-four, a lie's an abomination unto the Lord a hundred and twenty-five, a lie's an abomination unto the Lord a hundred and twenty-six,' recited Prudence Jane, and paused.

'Go on,' said Aunt Annie, looking up from her sewing and fixing her eyes severely on the small blue back across the room.

Prudence Jane, with the heels of her little ankle-ties together and her hands clasped tightly behind her, was standing in the corner, saying what was known in the family as her punish-sentence. Whenever she had been unusually naughty she had to say one four hundred times up in Aunt Annie's room. It was, no doubt, a silly sort of punishment, but it was one that Prudence Jane strongly objected to — and that, after all, is the essence of a punishment. Prudence Jane had seven teasing, mimicking brothers, and whenever one of them caught her saying a punish-sentence it was days before she heard the last of it. Already in the garden below there was audible a shrill voice singing, '*A lie is an abom-i-na-tion un-to the Lord,*' to the tune of '*Has anybody here seen Kelly?*' And out of the corner of her eye, that was supposed to be fastened on the rosebuds of Aunt Annie's wall-paper, Prudence Jane could see an impudent little person in corduroys, straddling the gravel walk and squinting up at the window.

'Is "a lie's an abomination" in the Bible?' inquired Prudence Jane.

'Yes,' said Aunt Annie, 'go on.'

'Where?' demanded Prudence Jane.

'Where?' repeated Aunt Annie a little blankly. 'Why — why — in the middle of the Bible. Don't you listen to the minister, Prudence Jane?'

'The middle of the minister's Bible?' pursued Prudence Jane.

'Yes, of course,' said Aunt Annie, 'Prudence Jane, if you don't go on at once I shall have you say it five hundred times.'

'A lie's an abomination unto the Lord a hundred and twenty-seven,' resumed Prudence Jane hastily.

Prudence Jane's sentences varied from day to day, it being Aunt Annie's idea to fit the sentence to the crime whenever possible. Thus, for being late to school it was, naturally, 'Procrastination is the thief of time.' While for telling Lena, the cook, that Uncle Arthur had said she was more of a lady than Aunt Annie, the sentence had been nothing less than, 'Truth crushed to earth will rise again.'

This particular fib had been very disastrous in its consequences. We will not dwell upon them here. They make a story in themselves. Suffice it to say that there was no possible excuse for Prudence Jane.

It was otherwise with the fib for which she was this morning serving a sentence up in Aunt Annie's room. Those who also have been named after their two grandmothers will at once forgive Prudence Jane for telling the

new minister, the very first time she met him, that her name was Imogen Rose. It was, to be sure, a stupid little fib, and was therefore quite unworthy of Prudence Jane. For Prudence Jane almost never told stupid little fibs. The fibs of Prudence Jane were little masterpieces, with a finish and distinction all their own. Her brother Will, who adored her, and had a large mind, declared when he came home from college that she was the greatest mistress of imaginative fiction since George Eliot. Her Aunt Annie, who had not had the advantages of a college course, and who roomed with Prudence Jane, said that she was a 'simple little liar.'

Now this was unfair of Aunt Annie, for whatever else Prudence Jane might be, she was *not* simple. Even her looks belied her. With her big confiding eyes, as round and blue as two forget-me-nots, and her pale yellow hair held demurely back from her forehead by a blue ribbon fillet, she gave an impression of gentle innocence that was altogether misleading.

'She is so like little Bertie,' dear old Grandma Piper would say; 'that same frail, flower-like look that he had toward the last. I almost tremble sometimes. Have n't you noticed a transparency about her lately, Annie?'

But Aunt Annie never had.

It may be said in passing that there was only one person to whom Prudence Jane was really transparent, and that was her youngest brother, Peter. Peter was a square, solid little person, with a vacant countenance; but nothing important that Prudence Jane did escaped him.

'Just to look into that sweet little face is enough for me,' Grandma Goodwin would declare; 'I don't want anybody to tell *me* that Prudence Jane is untruthful. No child could look straight at you out of her little soul as she always does, and tell a fib. The

trouble is they don't understand her at home. I've always said Annie Piper had a suspicious nature.'

To do Aunt Annie justice, it should be said that rooming with Prudence Jane did not tend to cultivate in one a nature that was trustful and confiding. And yet at heart Prudence Jane was really not at all the incorrigible little fibber that she seemed. She told fibs, not because she wished to deceive, but because the dull facts of life were so much less interesting than the lively little romances that she could make up out of her own head. When one is a creative genius one naturally rebels at being shackled to anything so tedious as a fact. Prudence Jane, looking back over a day, could rarely separate the things that had really happened from those that she had invented.

Her brother Horace, who was studying law, said that he would give a hundred dollars to see Prudence Jane on the witness stand. This was one night at supper when she was being cross-examined by Aunt Annie. For five minutes she had kept the family spell-bound by a circumstantial account of how that afternoon she had seen an automobile truck, loaded with a thousand boxes of eggs, go over the embankment. With eggs at sixty-five cents a dozen this was really a very shocking tale.

'Prudence Jane,' said Aunt Annie, who had private sources of information, 'you know well enough that no truck went over the embankment. Whatever do you mean by telling such an outrageous fib?'

Prudence Jane looked across the supper table at her aunt out of two round candid eyes.

'That was n't a fib; that was just a story,' she explained.

'Well, it was n't true; and stories that are n't true are very wicked,' said Aunt Annie with decision.

'Are all the stories in books true?'

inquired Prudence Jane, the picture of innocence behind her bowl of bread and milk.

'No,' Aunt Annie was forced to admit, 'but stories written in books are different. The writers don't mean for us to believe them.'

'Do they say so in the books?'"went on Prudence Jane relentlessly.

'Of course not,' said Aunt Annie, 'we know their stories are n't true, so they don't deceive us.'

'But you always know *my* stories are n't true too,' objected Prudence Jane, 'so I don't deceive you either.'

'Prudence Jane,' said Aunt Annie, 'I shan't argue with you. You are a very naughty little girl. I sometimes think that you don't belong to us at all; you're so different from your brothers.'

This was true. All the other little Pipers had been simple, virtuous children, with imaginations under perfect control — 'a remarkable family' everybody had said, until the Pipers became quite complacent about themselves. This was why Prudence Jane seemed like such a judgment upon them. They had waited long and patiently, as Aunt Annie put it, for Providence to see fit to send them a dear little girl to inherit her grandmothers' names — and they received Prudence Jane. Had she appeared at an earlier date, or had there been another girl in the family, she might have escaped either the Prudence or the Jane. But for fifteen years little masculine Pipers had arrived in the household with unbroken regularity, and been named, one by one, after all the available grandfathers and uncles. For the last one, indeed, there had not been even a cousin left, and he had been christened by common consent Peter Piper. And still the grandmothers waited.

From the moment, therefore, when bluff old Doctor Jones looked in upon

a parlor full of aunts, and announced that it was 'a girl at last, by Jove,' there had been no choice left for Prudence Jane. The only point discussed in the solemn family conclave was as to whether she should not be Jane Prudence.

'Oh, for mercy's sake, call the poor little kid Jurisprudence, and be done with it,' said a flippant uncle — and that had settled it. Prudence Jane was duly entered at the end of the list in the middle of the Family Bible, and her career began.

Through eight years she was just unmitigated Prudence Jane, — not a syllable of it could ever be omitted lest one grandmother or the other be slighted, — and then suddenly one day she decided that it was a combination no longer to be borne. She hated her name with all her little soul; therefore she would discard it and take another. This sounded simple, but there were, in fact, several complications. The most important was Aunt Annie. Never a really progressive spirit, in this matter of names Aunt Annie showed herself to be an out-and-out stand-patter.

'You wish that you had been called Gwendolin?' she echoed in horror, as she combed out the pale yellow hair at bed-time. 'Why, Prudence Jane, I'm ashamed of you. Gwendolin is a very silly name indeed, and you have two such noble ones. I only hope that you will grow up to be like the beautiful grandmamas who gave them to you' — which was a truly lovely little bit of optimism on Aunt Annie's part.

## II

Prudence Jane did not consult Aunt Annie further. That very night, however, staring up into the darkness from her little white bed, she decided upon a new combination. And when the Reverend Mr. Sanders came up to her the

next day after Sunday School, and inquired kindly what little girl this was, Prudence Jane was quite prepared to tell him, with the transparent look that so frightened dear old Grandma Piper, that it was Imogen Rose.

She fully meant to inform her family of this interesting change as soon as she got home from Sunday School, but when she tiptoed into the parlor Aunt Annie, in all the majesty of her plum-colored satin, was sitting in a straight-backed chair reading *The Christian Word and Work*, and looked unresponsive to new ideas. So Prudence Jane tiptoed out again, to await a more favorable moment. Unfortunately, before that moment arrived she had a falling-out with her brother Peter. This was a mistake, for it was the part of prudence always to make an ally of Peter Piper. He had discovered Prudence Jane flat on the floor in a corner of the library, scratching her name out of the Family Bible with an ink eraser.

'Did the minister tell you to write Imogen in?' he inquired blandly, as he stood in the doorway with his hands in his corduroys.

'None of your business,' retorted Prudence Jane, closing the Bible with a bang and sitting down upon it.

The result was that Peter Piper, from whom nothing was ever hidden, went off and told Aunt Annie all about Imogen Rose and the minister. Whereupon Aunt Annie, with her usual limited point of view, had pronounced it a very monstrous fib indeed, and had sent Prudence Jane instantly into the corner.

'A lie's an abomination unto the Lord three hundred and ninety-eight, a lie's an abomination unto the Lord three hundred and ninety-nine, a lie's an abomination unto the Lord four hundred,' finished Prudence Jane at a canter, and whisked around from her corner.

Aunt Annie beckoned with solemn finger.

'To-morrow, Prudence Jane,' she said, looking across the sewing-table, 'I am going to take you to see the minister and you must tell him yourself what your real name is, and what a dreadful story you have told him. I shall ask him what he thinks should be done with a little girl who cannot speak the truth. I'm sure I don't know what he will say. But we can't deceive a minister. They always know when they hear a fib.'

'Do they?' asked Prudence Jane, openly interested, her round eyes fastened upon her aunt.

'Always,' replied Aunt Annie rashly.

'Then why do I have to go and tell him?' asked Prudence Jane.

'Prudence Jane,' said Aunt Annie, 'you are a very saucy little girl, and I'm sure I don't know what is going to become of you.'

Prudence Jane walked slowly out of the room. She was considering what Aunt Annie had said about ministers, and she wondered if it were true. As she went tripping down the stairs she decided to put the Reverend Mr. Sanders to a test the very next time she met him. And that was why it was so surprising, when she peeked through the hall window at the foot of the stairs, to behold him diligently wiping his feet on the door-mat.

'How do you do,' said Prudence Jane politely, as she opened the door.

'Why, good afternoon, Imogen,' said the minister, shaking hands cordially.

Prudence Jane made the little knix that she had learned at German school. It was always the finishing touch to Prudence Jane. The Reverend Mr. Sanders looked down upon it with a most friendly smile.

'Is your aunt at home?' he asked, placing his hat on the table and following Prudence Jane into the parlor.



'Yes,' she said with simple candor. A fib of that sort was quite beneath Prudence Jane.

Then she sat down on a velvet sofa, spread out her little blue skirt, folded her hands in her lap and crossed her ankle-ties. She had never in her life looked so much like little Bertie. The Reverend Mr. Sanders, regarding her from an opposite chair, waited for her to open her lips and say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.' Instead, this is what she said:—

'Is Eliza Anna Bomination your grandmother?'

'I beg pardon,' said the Reverend Mr. Sanders.

'Is she dead and gone to heaven, and that's why you say "unto the Lord"?'

continued Prudence Jane.

'I wonder, Imogen,' he said, 'if you would mind beginning over again.'

'I say, is Eliza Anna Bomination your grandmother?' repeated Prudence Jane. 'Aunt Annie says she's written down in the middle of your Bible where all people's relations are, and she sounded like a grandmother; they always have such horrid names.'

The minister looked across at the velvet sofa with eyes that entirely contradicted the gravity of his face.

'No,' he said, 'I'm sorry, but she is n't. I wish she were. I never heard of such a jolly grandmother.'

'Is she an aunt?' pursued his small interlocutor.

'I'm afraid that she's not even related by marriage,' he replied.

'Is n't she written down in the middle of your Bible at all?' said Prudence Jane.

The minister shook his head.

'No,' he said, 'I'm afraid not.'

'Then Aunt Annie told a whopper,' announced Prudence Jane with satisfaction.

'We should not malign the absent,' said the Reverend Mr. Sanders. 'And

that being the case, suppose you go up at this point, Imogen, and tell your Aunt Annie that I am here.'

Prudence Jane wondered what 'maligning the absent' was. She distrusted gentlemen who made cryptic remarks of this sort. It was a way her brother Horace had. She saw that the moment had now arrived to test Aunt Annie's theory about ministers and fibs.

'She can't come down,' she replied.

'Can't come down?' repeated the minister.

'No,' said Prudence Jane, looking at him out of the depths of her forget-me-not eyes, 'she's washed her hair.'

'Oh,' said the Reverend Mr. Sanders, in the tone of one who finds the conversation getting definitely beyond him.

At this moment an apparition with a round face and a pair of corduroy shoulders suddenly darkened the open window.

'A *lie* is an a-bom-i-na-tion un-to the Lord,' it sang and, catching sight of the clerical back, vanished hastily.

'Interesting chorus,' observed the Reverend Mr. Sanders.

Prudence Jane paid no heed to this interruption.

'It's hanging down her back now,' she pursued, launching upon the details with her usual aplomb. 'It comes clear down to here.' And standing up, she indicated a point halfway between her ankle-ties and the bottom of her ridiculous skirt.

The minister gazed fascinated. Prudence Jane sat down again.

'She washed it with Packer's Tar Soap,' she said, her eyes fixed upon her victim.

She was quite unable to make out whether Aunt Annie was right about ministers or not. The Reverend Mr. Sanders looked like the Sphinx.

'She gave a piece to a gentleman once,' went on Prudence Jane, warming to her work. 'He was n't a very

nice gentleman. He was a — a —' she hesitated a moment over a fitting climax, — 'a — a Piskerpalyan,' she finished.

'Mercy!' said the Reverend Mr. Sanders, finding his voice at last. 'And what, may I ask, are you?'

Prudence Jane looked faintly surprised.

'I,' she said, with pride and composure, 'am an Orthy Dox Congo Gationist.'

'Yes,' said the Reverend Mr. Sanders, 'so I suspected from the first.'

And now *what* did he mean by that, thought Prudence Jane to herself. She could no longer see his face. He had turned abruptly in his chair and was watching something through the aperture in the portières.

Prudence Jane heard the thump of a pair of shoes plodding up the stairs and along the upper hall. She knew that it was Peter Piper going to find Aunt Annie. There was a stir in the room overhead, then the muffled sound of a rocking-chair suddenly abandoned, followed by the swish of skirts coming along the passage and down the stairs.

Prudence Jane sat with parted lips on the edge of the sofa.

The Reverend Mr. Sanders looked decidedly nervous, but he rose and presented a bold front to whatever might be coming to him through those portières. In another moment they were pushed hastily aside, and Aunt Annie, crowned with a quite faultless coiffure, hurried into the room.

'Why, Mr. Sanders,' she said, 'I did not know until this minute that you were here.'

Then her eye fell upon her niece. Prudence Jane was now standing in front of the sofa, tracing the pattern of

the carpet with the toe of an ankletie.

'Why didn't you tell me that Mr. Sanders was waiting?' demanded Aunt Annie sternly.

Prudence Jane continued to gaze at the carpet.

'Mr. Sanders,' said Aunt Annie, who never postponed a disagreeable duty, 'we have a little girl here who cannot speak the truth, and we are going to ask you to tell us what becomes of people who tell wrong stories.'

The Reverend Mr. Sanders looked ill at ease.

'Come here,' continued Aunt Annie, holding out her hand toward the velvet sofa.

Prudence Jane moved reluctantly across the room.

'And now,' went on the voice of the accuser, 'she has even deceived her minister, and she has come to make her little confession. Tell Mr. Sanders,' directed Aunt Annie, 'the truth about that wicked fib.'

'Which one?' inquired Prudence Jane meekly.

'You know very well which,' answered her exasperated aunt, 'the last one.'

Prudence Jane lifted her blue eyes from the carpet and looked straight at the unfortunate Mr. Sanders.

'She did n't give any of it to the Piskerpalyan,' she said.

Then she turned and walked discreetly through the portières. She felt that it was no moment to stay and learn what became of little girls who told whoppers.

'Did n't give who what?' she could hear Aunt Annie saying vaguely on the other side of the curtains. But Prudence Jane decided to let her minister explain.

# EUGENICS AND COMMON SENSE

BY H. FIELDING-HALL

THERE is nothing, I think, that brings home to one more conclusively the unity of life, and therefore the unity of knowledge of that life, than the attempt to study any particular subject by itself and confine yourself to it alone. You find very soon that you cannot do so. No aspect of life can be separated from the rest and understood even in any small degree without some knowledge of the rest of life. No part of life stands alone. Every phenomenon of life is the result, not of one or two causes alone, but of the interaction of innumerable causes. To get near the understanding of only one item you must be able to estimate more or less truly all the forces that make life, and the objective of life. As with the eddy of a river, to estimate it you must know, not merely the eddy but much also of the river, its volume and its speed, the density of its waters, the configuration of its banks and its general direction. The observation of the eddy only would lead you into the wildest fallacies.

When I began over twenty years ago to study crime and its cause this fact soon became impressed upon me. To study crime alone would lead me nowhere. Crime was but an eddy in life's current, and to know the eddy I must know much of the current. I must understand something of life, of that humanity in which crime is but a defect, not necessarily of the criminal. I must do my best to master many aspects of that life.

348

And among the first of the studies which I found it necessary to pursue was that which is called heredity. I must learn all I could about heredity, because at that time many scientific men declared that all crime was hereditary, inevitably bequeathed from father to son and therefore incurable and hopeless.

Now, my own experience and observation told me just the opposite; I was unable to find in life one single instance where I could confidently say that a tendency to crime was inherited. Every case I investigated showed me the reverse, — that it was not hereditary. Whatever might be inherited, it was not a tendency to crime. I therefore read and reread Lombroso and the writers of his school with great care and constant application to facts as I found them. And very soon I discovered the underlying fallacies, not of their facts but, even where their facts were true, of their reasoning from those facts. Lombroso and his school had studied only the eddy and ignored the stream; they had observed and measured the criminal when made, and neither normal human nature nor the criminal before he was made. They found certain stigmata on criminals; they inferred a connection between these and crime; they ignored the fact that the stigmata occur on the non-criminal. I think that, in Europe at least, this hereditary theory of crime is dead.

Now this method of arguing from a few facts gained in a very narrow field is a very common cause of error.

But my interest in heredity had been awakened and has never since died. It is a subject I am never weary of. It is true that, being neither a biologist nor a doctor, I cannot make discoveries of my own, but I try to keep abreast of all discoveries that are made, and to bring them to the touchstone of life. I do not dispute facts, but I examine most carefully the exact value of those facts. I collate them with facts of life arrived at in quite other ways than by biology, and I examine all reasoning based on those facts.

Thus this new 'science' of Eugenics has no more interested student than myself. I am aware that there must be something in heredity, I have no idea what it is; I am very desirous to learn; but on the other hand I will never allow my wish for knowledge to lead me into accepting what is not absolutely proved to be true. I would never condone a general inference from a restricted observation, and I would bring in every fact I have learned of other sides of life to correct biology. For instance, if biology asserts that it has established a theory to which sociology emphatically denies any truth in observed human nature, I would prefer the latter till the two could be reconciled. Because life is the stream and biology only an eddy.

## II

Let us turn then to Eugenics as at present taught and see what truth we can find in it. I shall quote some of its first principles from a leading Eugenic textbook and make some remarks on them, and then I shall give you some facts from life. Within an article it is impossible to do more than this, but I think it will suffice.

To begin with, is there such a thing as heredity? A father has blue eyes and so has his son. Is there a special energy

or force that did this? Suppose his son has brown eyes — did heredity stop acting? Was it, so to speak, turned off? That is absurd. The forces which caused the boy's eyes in one case to be like the father's and in the next case unlike, were the same. No one doubts that. No new force or energy had been introduced.

Heredity therefore is not a thing in itself. It has no existence in fact; it denotes no constant actual living force. It is simply a noun derived from the adjective hereditary. Hereditary means handed down from parent to child, — simply that and nothing more. An estate is hereditary. The brown eyes were as truly hereditary as the blue, no more, no less. As all life proceeds from life, all life in every detail is hereditary. Try to realize and be certain of this; it will prevent you from falling into errors. It is commonly said, for instance, that certain qualities are hereditary and others are not. For instance, a genius suddenly appearing of commonplace progenitors is said not to be hereditary. But a genius is born, so he must be hereditary in the true sense; genius is not acquired.

Thus in common usage the word heredity is abused and twisted into meaning something it does not mean, namely, a tendency in children to reproduce the more or less unusual qualities of parents. It is assumed that there is such a general tendency. But it has never been proved.

So much for the word; now let us take some of the arguments. 'Man is an organism — an animal; and the laws of improvement of corn and of race-horses hold true for him also.' That is the first assertion; what truth is there in it? Let us consider. Man's body has developed in many thousands of years from being an animal, and in many ten thousands of years from being a plant; does that prove that he is still nothing

but a plant or an animal, that in his evolution he has not added very much to what went before, quite enough to upset any theories formed from what plants and animals do? Do the higher qualities of brain and emotion count for nothing at all? There seems no objection to Eugenists classing themselves with cabbages and dogs and cats, but does the rest of the world accept this for itself? Are you content to be described and treated as a beast, and a beast only? Each reader will answer that for himself no doubt, and I need not elaborate the point. It is the cheerful and veracious foundation of Eugenics.

Let us continue. The Eugenist takes man purely as a plant or as an animal; he wants to breed him just as animals are bred, so let us consider how plants and animals are bred and what the result has been. He says: 'Surely the human product is superior to poultry,' — the very foundation of his whole argument is that it is not; however, let us go on, — 'and as we may now predict with precision the characters of the offspring of a particular pair of pedigreed poultry so it may be some time with man.'

The writer here, and he subsequently elaborates the point, wants the reader to believe that scientific precision has been reached in breeding plants and animals, that no exceptions exist to their laws, and that consequently no such failures in breeding mankind could occur under the Eugenist system as occur at present.

But this statement is entirely untrue. There is no such certainty. Even as regards purely physical traits it is untrue, and it must be remembered that scientific breeding has been concerned only with these, to the exclusion of all else. There are an enormous number of failures. If, for instance, you mate the winner of the Derby with the winner of

the Oaks, shall you obtain colts and fillies which will unfailingly inherit the speed of their parents? Look at the stud-book for answer. Even in plants, where success is more general, the number of failures is enormous compared to the successes. The rule is not absolute or nearly so. The successes of Burbank cannot compare with his failures, and mendelism has many exceptions.

Still, let us go on. Let us assume with the Eugenists that we really are no different from cabbages and roses, or horses and dogs, — that every rule which applies to them applies to us, — and let us see what the scientific breeding of plants and animals has effected. What has been the result?

Well, the result has been astonishing. The simple little wild Persian rose, for instance, has been improved into the gorgeous blooms of our gardens; the small, rather sour apple has become the Albemarle Pippin; the wild dog has become the great Dane, the mastiff, the bull-dog, the pug; and the barb mixed with the Frisian horse has become the thoroughbred. In size, in beauty, in variety, in qualities useful to mankind, plants and animals have been improved out of recognition.

That is quite true. But what of the other qualities? What, for instance, of health and intelligence? Have these also increased *pari passu* with the increase in size? Go to a nursery gardener, to a racing stable, to a dog-fancier, and inquire. You will learn this: the extraordinary improvement in size and shape has been gained at the cost of all other qualities. Thoroughbred plants and animals are very tender, they require most assiduous attention, they have to be nursed like babies. They have no stamina, and they have no brains. They are so delicate that unless they are continually protected and doctored they are devoured by disease. A rose-grower's outfit now includes in-

numerable medicines without which his blooms would be destroyed. If you abandon a garden of any cultivated flowers for a few years, the vigorous and hardy wild plants will choke all your improved stock; nothing will be left save perhaps a few lucky plants which have managed to evolve as it were backwards and regain some of their virility by abandoning their acquired splendor. In free competition the improved plant does not stand the ghost of a chance with its unimproved brothers. The struggle ends inevitably and tragically.

It is exactly the same with improved birds and animals. In open competition for a livelihood thoroughbred stock would be doomed. It has no constitution, it cannot get a living for itself, cannot bear exposure, must be cared for like an invalid. Read for instance the history of the cavalry and mounted infantry horses in the Boer War. The fine-bred stock from England was useless. It died in heaps. It was only horses from places where they are brought up semi-wild, as in the Argentine and Australian runs, that were of any use. Even they did not compare with the Boer ponies.

A further fact, and one still more important to remark, is that all tame stock is incomparably inferior in intellect to wild stock. There is so little opportunity for people of civilized nations nowadays to observe wild animals that this fact is often overlooked. But the difference is startling. Look at a pack of wild dogs, as I often have. They hunt with a science and precision that tame fox-hounds have no idea of, even when directed by huntsmen and whips. A pack of wild dogs will mark down a stag — they always select stags with big heads if possible — in a piece of forest surrounded by grass. They will post sentries at the exits and the rest of the pack will go to the end and

beat the jungle through. When the stag breaks, the sentries at the exit give tongue and warn the rest who immediately run to their call.

There is no one who like myself has kept both wild and domesticated animals as pets who has not noticed that the latter are fools to the former. It is a commonplace of knowledge. Here is a story in illustration, from the life of the elder Dumas.

He had a dog and a fox both chained up near the house. One day he gave a bone to each, putting it just out of reach, to see what would happen. Well, at first, both acted in the same way, they strained at the chain. The fox, however, soon found out the uselessness of this and sat down to consider. Then he got up, turned round so as to add the length of his body to that of the chain, reached the bone with his hind leg, and having scraped it within reach, sat down to eat it. But the dog not only could not think of this himself, but even when he saw the fox do it, he could not imitate it.

The more scientifically bred animals are, the less brain they have. If you want a dog who will be an intelligent and sympathetic companion, which do you choose, the dog bred by 'science' or the dog bred by the natural selection of mutual love, the thoroughbred or the mongrel? All experience says the latter. Therefore, suppose the Eugenicists had their way and established a state, what would the inhabitants of that state be like in a few generations? They would be tall, broad, muscular, beautiful, delicate to a degree, useless save for athletic contests or beauty shows, always in the doctor's hands, — Eugenic doctor of course, — brainless, incapable of affection, almost wanting in courage, to a great extent sterile; and in the end, if the state did not die of inanition first, some more virile and intelligent race, say the Hottentots or



Andamense, would come and eat its inhabitants. The Eugenic Utopia would end in the digestive apparatus of a savage. *Sic transit gloria Eugenix*. Nothing could be more certain than that.

### III

Now, leaving plants and animals behind us, let us come to man, and see what Eugenists have discovered.

They declare that certain diseases are transmitted to children; greater authorities deny that disease ever is or ever could be so transmitted. So much for that. They have found a few notable cases where a feeble-minded progenitor, such as Jukes, produced generations like himself. They found a few cases where able and talented parents did the same; they have in some cases traced certain defects for several generations. *That is absolutely all.*

Of the much greater number of cases where the quality is not transmitted they make no mention. Let me therefore again repeat what Buckle said on such systems of argument; it should never be forgotten: 'We often hear of hereditary talents, hereditary vices, and hereditary virtues; but whoever will critically examine the evidence will see that we have no proof of their existence. The way in which they are commonly proved is in the highest degree illogical, the usual course being for writers to collect instances of some mental peculiarity found in parent and child and then to infer that the peculiarity was bequeathed. By this mode of reasoning we might demonstrate any proposition, since in all large fields of inquiry there are a sufficient number of empirical coincidences to make a plausible case in favor of whatever view a man chooses to advocate. But this is not the way in which truth is discovered; and we ought to inquire not only how many cases there are of heredi-

tary talents, and so forth, but also how many there are of such qualities not being hereditary.' Do the Eugenists do this?

Arguing as the Eugenists do, you could prove anything. For instance, I know families where the men for generations have been wounded or killed in action. The Battyses of Indian fame are such a family. Let us argue about this like the Eugenists. 'When men are wounded they become defective; they are a great expense to the State for pensions and are no more good; when they are killed they can't fight any more and their widows and children have to be provided for. All this is a great burden to the country. Getting wounded or killed is undoubtedly a hereditary taint. Therefore we should breed our soldiers from stock which has never had any one killed or wounded among its predecessors, and therefore may be certain not to get into any danger should war break out.'

Again, as Lombroso and many others have shown, genius and great ability are usually associated with disease, the reason being that great men are often over-engined for their physique, which takes its revenge. Their diseases are really wounds received in warfare. The Eugenists would eliminate all disease and with it all ability. For instance they would have prevented Lord Bacon from being born. Now whether Bacon did or did not write Shakespeare's plays, he was one of the greatest men we have ever produced. He sheds a lustre on us yet. We would not change him for a wilderness of Eugenists. And what of the world romance of Browning and his wife?

Their arguments in this whole matter teem with fallacies. Because consumption often occurred in generation after generation it used to be assumed to be hereditary. We know now that it is not. What seems to be hereditary is

a certain diathesis, which under unfavorable circumstances may result in a feeble consumptive, in others may give us a Rhodes or a Keats. They know that, yet they argue in exactly the old way in other cases.

Thus in the biological field no discovery has yet been made of any certain law of inheritance even in the smallest matters of physique and appearance. An athlete not only does not always have athletic sons, but he often has none at all; and so with other matters. As to the greater matters of intelligence and virility, *nothing whatever is known*. And be it remembered that the progress of mankind is a progress of intelligence, not of physique. Have Eugenists still to learn this? Apparently they have.<sup>1</sup>

And now, leaving this little eddy called biology, let us go into the wide stream of life, and see what is known there. Let us consider the process by which man has evolved so far, and what the experience and observation of thousands of years have taught us. Let us look at what the Eugenist is pleased to call 'the present haphazard method of mating that obtains even among cultured people.' What is that method? Well, it is usually called falling in love.

There is between young men and maidens a general mutual attraction. They like to look at each other, to talk, to touch each other. It is far stronger with men than girls, but it is in both. It is, however, for the most part general and vague. Then at some time or other this general warmth is concentrated upon one object. He falls in love and she as a rule returns it. What is the meaning of this selection? Why

<sup>1</sup> If the reader wishes to read what perhaps the greatest living biologist, who is also a thinker, has to say of Eugenics, I commend to him the address of Professor William Bateson to the International Congress of Medicine in London. It is given in the *British Medical Gazette* for August 16, 1913.

does something within him pick her out unconsciously from all other women? Why does she echo to the call? It is the cry of Nature wanting children for her future, saying to him, 'She is thy mate. Only thus can be born such children as I desire, strong in emotion, in intelligence, in brain. Such are what I want.'

Therefore, to get her way Nature creates a passion and promises a happiness.

That is what the world knows, has always known, and never can forget. It knows that love is life. Suppose the Eugenists could have their way and banish love, who would care to live? What purpose would life have? It would have none. There would be no life, only an existence wearisome and dull. The world feels that love is beautiful, it sees in practice that it is true. Love makes the world, love keeps it, only to love shall it be given in the future. Therefore have poets sung it and storytellers told of it; therefore do eyes shine and cheeks burn for it. Therefore is it the soul of art, of music, of literature. Fancy the future Eugenic novel or play. Scene, a drawing-room, with a young woman in it. Enter to her a young man led by a Eugenist doctor, who says to her, 'My wise young lady, let me introduce to you Mr. Dash. He has been carefully selected as your mate.' And to him, 'Young man, behold the mother of your future children.' Does it not read charmingly?

You see that the Eugenist omits love. He knows nothing about it or about the world. I never realized how extraordinarily ignorant Eugenists were of human nature till I heard a recent Eugenic lecture. In that, among other things, the lecturer said that if nowadays there arose a new Cleopatra she would be relegated at once to the wards of an asylum; and his audience laughed with pleasure. It delighted them to

think how superior each of themselves was to such a famous woman, and they gloated over it.

Yet I had other thoughts and among them these:—How mediocrity hates eminence! When the Eugenists seize Cleopatra, what will Mark Antony be doing? When the Eugenists shall have built their lethal chamber for the feeble-minded, who should be its first inhabitants?

Love is the motive power of the world. It is the purifying and regenerating power. Even 'degenerates' who should really love each other would have more intelligent children than a healthy couple mated without love. Children are the sparks struck out as by flint and steel which meet. The stronger their momentum when they meet, the greater and brighter the flash. All the world save the Eugenists knows that.

Love is the one thing which makes life worth living. It has its reward. And if you neglect or sin against it the punishment is sure. Nemesis comes slowly but it comes surely.

Though the mills of God grind slowly  
Yet they grind exceeding small.

Whenever an individual or a class or a

nation has sinned against love, has it not paid? Has it not paid the utmost penalty of death? No lesson is more certainly written on the page of history than is this.

Whenever an individual has married without love, his children, if he have any, are useless. When a class has denied love and instituted marriage for money, for position, for family, it has decayed and disappeared. Whenever by its marriage customs a people has sinned against love, how great has been the penalty! Look at the decadence of India since the mating of children without love was introduced by religion. India once led the world. It does not so lead now. And why? Principally for that reason.

Remember what was written in the Kural thousands of years ago: 'That only lives which is instinct with love. That which has not love is but a rotten carcass covered with skin. And from putridity what will you get but maggots?'

So would the Eugenists have marriage.

This is often called the age of science, and truly. We have Christian Science, and Eugenics. What next?

# PAGAN MORALS

BY EMILY JAMES PUTNAM

## I

As M. Bergson remarks, it is very fatiguing to be a human being. If we compare ourselves with the other animals we see how hard our case is. We have in the first place to stand upright, a feat for which we are not yet completely adapted. And then we are obliged to do more or less thinking, however skillfully we may reduce the amount. Above all we are compelled by a number of constraining influences to be to a certain degree consciously 'good.' Whenever we begin to think about the perplexing question of goodness, to wonder why we are almost all driven more or less spasmodically to strive for it and to complain because it is so elusive, so hard to attain even with the best will in the world, so uncertain in its aims and claims and sanctions, so troublesome and yet so indispensable, we are driven back to the Greeks.

The man in the street is not likely to name as the foremost attribute of the Greeks their moral success, and yet he ought to. They, first of men, made a discovery about morals which must be our salvation if we are to be saved, and their interest in the subject is obscured for us only by the multiplicity of their claims on our attention. If, like the Hebrews, they had stripped life of all its *agréments*, if they had had no sense of beauty or of humor, no splendid achievements of pure literature, of politics, or of science, we should see them, as we see the Hebrews, con-

sumed by their concern for righteousness.

Among people like the English-speaking communities who instinctively avoid whenever possible the pain and strain of thought, a happy literary formula comes easily to have the paralyzing effect of a taboo. The freest minds are the source of the most compelling formulas, and they therefore quite unintentionally rivet new bonds upon their contemporaries in the place of those they strike off. Thus Matthew Arnold, a man given to thinking for himself, provided his age with a number of catchwords which dispensed those who used them from giving any further thought to the subjects to which they apply. I suppose no one reads Matthew Arnold to-day, but his most striking formulas have passed into the tradition of English speech and go marching indefinitely on. One of the most telling and most misleading is his famous chapter-heading, 'Hebraism and Hellenism.' There are in the chapter itself paragraphs which if carefully read go far to minimize the antithesis suggested by the title. But a man who is writing under so taking a caption can hardly help being carried on by auto-suggestion to the symmetrical rounding out of its implications. Thus Arnold begins by stating plumply that 'the final aim of both Hellenism and Hebraism, as of all great spiritual disciplines, is no doubt the same: man's perfection or salvation. The very language which they both of them use in schooling us to reach this aim is often

identical. Even where their language indicates by variation — sometimes a broad variation, often a but slight and subtle variation — the different courses of thought which are uppermost in each discipline, even then the unity of the final end and aim is still apparent.' And he goes on to explain that the difference is mainly one of temperament and of method.

So far he is sound and consistent, though we may be permitted to doubt whether he puts his finger on the precise difference of method that constitutes the antithesis. But toward the end of his brilliant chapter he insensibly swings back to the vulgar error he elsewhere strives to combat. He has forgotten that the Greek equally with the Hebrew was concerned 'for man's perfection or salvation.' And he commits the historic blunder of confounding the Hellenism of Hellas with the so-called Hellenism of the Revival of Learning. 'The Renaissance,' he writes, 'that great reawakening of Hellenism, that irresistible return of humanity to nature and to seeing things as they are, which in art, in literature, and in physics, produced such splendid fruits, had, like the anterior Hellenism of the Pagan world, a side of moral weakness, and of relaxation or insensibility of the moral fibre, which in Italy showed itself with the most startling plainness, but which in France, England, and other countries was very apparent too.'

His title has been too much for him. If Hebraism consists largely in moral earnestness, Hellenism must have 'a side of moral weakness.' But even if the chapter were the most complete correction of the implication of its heading, perhaps only one person has read the chapter for every thousand who have been subjected to the injurious effect of the title. The total result has been to stereotype the conception of Hellen-

ism formed by the Lutheran movement and affirmed by the anticlassical reaction which followed the French Revolution. According to this conception the Greek was a happy faun, obeying the voice of appetite and burdened by no consciousness of sin. If we recall the individual Greeks who are best known to us from childhood, — Odysseus, Achilles, Ædipus, Solon, Leonidas, Pericles, Socrates, Archimedes, — it is an astonishing tribute to the strength of formula that the resultant composite photograph can be made to resemble a happy faun.

## II

There is nevertheless a very real distinction between Hebraism and Hellenism in the field of morals. It cannot be expressed by saying that the one made 'better' men than the other. It would be easy enough to show that Hebraism as well as Hellenism had 'a side of moral weakness.' One superiority of the Greek from our point of view was his rather extraordinary love of truth. Homer is full of the sacredness of the oath, of which Zeus was guardian. I know a little boy who had become familiar with the words and deeds of the Homeric heroes and knew that one of the most perverse of them had declared with sincerity, 'Hateful to me as hell is he who hides one thing in his heart and tells another.' This boy was next introduced to the stories of the Hebrews and listened with wondering eyes to the extraordinary tale of greed and falsehood which centres about the name of Jacob. He was waiting for the curse of heaven to fall upon the traitor, but when the narrative went on to tell how Jehovah approved the deed and said to Jacob, 'Thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,' the little

boy cried out in his bewilderment, 'But was n't that naughty of Jehovah?'

A striking case of the superior conscientiousness of the Greeks in regard to truth comes out in a story told by Herodotus. Hipparchus, tyrant of Athens in the sixth century, a man whom the Greeks themselves would not have pointed out as a type of virtue, banished his friend Onomacritus, editor of the prophecies of Musæus, because Onomacritus foisted into the writings of Musæus a prophecy of his own. With this strict critical sense of the sanctity of documents, which perished with Hellenism and has come to life only in the scholarly conscience of our own day, we may compare the attitude of the Hebrew priest of the fifth century before Christ, who, from the highest motives, systematically revised, expurgated, and augmented the sacred writings and imposed the new edition on the people as of immemorial antiquity.

Such comparisons between pot and kettle are not however really fruitful. The truly instructive contrast between Hebraism and Hellenism is based on the fact that they typify most conveniently the two sorts of sanction which have in varying combinations operated everywhere in the world to make men consciously practice what they believe to be right.

Many causes of course operate to make men unconsciously choose the right, working for the survival of the individual and of the group. But when a man gives a reason for his moral choices it falls under one of two heads. He has either a theory, utilitarian, hedonistic, or transcendental, in accordance with which he acts; or he acts in obedience to some law which he acknowledges to be authoritative even in extreme cases where it conflicts with his reason. Under one of these heads or the other, the rational or the jural,

can be ranged every reason which any one has ever given for making a moral choice. Perhaps most men use both types in varying proportions; certainly every social group is governed by both. Most religions rely mainly on the jural principle, but many strive to conciliate law with reason. And rational systems on the other hand often tend to crystallize into laws which exact and receive obedience after changing circumstances have destroyed their rational basis. The taboo everywhere is jural. We may be able to see in certain cases a sanitary or economic ground for a taboo, but it is not that ground that makes it binding. It is no more binding than other taboos which lack that ground, and the great majority of which we have knowledge do lack it. The taboo, however, is not yet morality, though it is on the way to become so. It is gradually softened into custom; custom becomes after a time self-conscious and critical; and thus morality is born.

Now it is evident that the chief problem of morality everywhere and at all times lies in the fact that the old order is always changing. In regard to moral ideas as to all other ideas, the human procession straggles along like an early people on the trek; a few leaders press forward in advance, the mass do as they are told and cling to each other for mutual comfort and assurance, bands of heretics here and there fall off to find a better way or to settle in an attractive spot, declaring they will seek no further; and at the end of the column are the incompetent and the lazy, begging to be left behind to die.

In this irregular advance through an uncharted land toward an unknown goal, the leaders have always upon their shoulders the burden of their responsibility toward the weaker brethren. The choice of the moment for breaking up the last camp and pressing on again



into the wilderness becomes in itself the nicest of moral questions. Ethics are 'alike fantastic if too new or old.' All manner of anomalies and contradictions are born of the fact that where men long to find a set of laws as rigorous and of as universal application as those of mathematics, they find merely a group of principles themselves open to dispute and needing at every turn the labor of comprehension and of application. In this situation many a good man has violated his conscience to obey the law, and many a good man by obeying his conscience in spite of the law has so weakened a rule that was helpful to others as to have become a stumbling-block. Thus there are apparently cases in which it is wrong to do right. 'You seem to think honesty as easy as blind-man's-buff,' says one of Stevenson's characters. 'I don't. It's some difference of definition.'

### III

As part of the great effort not to think, the jural conception of morals, the notion that morals are, like geometry or blind-man's-buff, amenable to ascertainable and universally binding laws, has been of unquestionable usefulness to the race, but it has enjoyed a popularity out of all proportion to its usefulness. Some of its drawbacks may most conveniently be noted in connection with Hebraism, which is its fullest and most enduring expression. Mr. Dewey and Mr. Tufts remark that the Decalogue is the mother of casuistry, and that the habit of looking to law for guidance 'fixes attention not upon the positive good in an act, nor upon the underlying agent's disposition which forms its spirit, nor upon the unique occasion and context which form its atmosphere, but upon its literal conformity with Rule A, Class I, Species 1, sub-head (1), and so forth. The effect

of this is inevitably to narrow the scope and lessen the depth of conduct. It tempts some to hunt for that classification of their act which will make it the most convenient or profitable for themselves. With others, this regard for the letter makes conduct formal and pedantic. It gives rise to a rigid and hard type of character illustrated among the Pharisees of olden and the Puritans of modern time.'

The drawbacks here dwelt upon are all in the nature of injuries to the moral sense of the individual. It might conceivably be the case that the general social welfare would be so furthered by the punctilious observance of an immutable moral code that the sacrifice of the highest spiritual life of the individual would be worth the price. In point of fact, however, society suffers from it as much as the individual. The prevalence of such a code tends to render society static. Certain groups have never emerged from the primitive jural stage of taboo, and are tied hand and foot by it. Two things happen when conduct, in itself a conservative thing, is in close alliance with religion, which is even more conservative and therefore opposes very great resistance to modification. In the first place the preoccupation with law becomes so great that there is no room left in life for other considerations. And in the second place, as the unchangeable code becomes obsolete, the people bound by it falls out of sympathy with more progressive peoples and is left behind as they advance.

The Hebrews suffered in both these ways. In the first place the struggle for life and the observance of the law exhausted their energies and left them no time for art, for science, or for general literature. The meagreness of their intellectual life as long as they remained a nation was not only a misfortune to themselves but has remained a misfor-

tune for Europe, since the revivals of Hebraism which take place from time to time always include in their principles a presumption against art, science, and general literature. It will be seen, however, when we glance at Hellenism, that though these fields of life are refractory, or at best irrelevant, to the law, they afford, like every other field, the constant occasion for moral choice based on reason, and were not conceived by the Greeks, as by some moderns, as unmoral, but as having ethical bearings of the very highest importance. In the second place the Hebrews were very greatly hampered in social advance by the static character of their institutions. Of course their institutions were not actually rigid, or the group would not have had the measure of national success it did enjoy. Even Jehovah was obliged in the long run to alter his political opinions and approve of monarchy after having long opposed it. But the social and economic reforms so passionately urged by Amos and Isaiah never came to pass.

The jural system of morals of the Hebrews rapidly reasserted itself in Christian theory, although the founder of Christianity died in protest against the law. The Church of Rome affirmed the principle with all its consequences from the hieratic point of view, and the Reformation affirmed it from the documentary point of view. Modern thought is saturated with it. Kant's categorical imperative is descended from the Decalogue much more directly than he would have liked to believe. On the other hand it has become plainer than ever during the last hundred years that morality is a growing thing, changing with changing conditions, varying from land to land and from age to age; that its formulas are to be accepted as provisional, not permanent, and that its natural sanctions are powerful enough to make it persist. 'La vertu, sans doute, est de

tous les pays et de tous les ages. Sa présence est partout nécessaire, le peuple ne subsiste que par elle.' This belief in the social origin, the progressive character, and the natural sanction of ethics is the belief of the Greeks. They were the first of mankind to hold it, and the weight of their prestige sufficed to keep it alive in the world through the centuries when the jural view prevailed. It is still far from triumphant. The force of authority is still overwhelming. We are just beginning to struggle back to the state of mind which was native to the Greeks, and, thanks to them, was enjoyed even by the Romans, a people astonishingly like ourselves in their spiritual limitations.

## IV

The Greek of course began like all other men by practicing the primitive morality of custom, and the primitive morality of custom is that of the ant and the bee, a morality careful of the welfare of the group, careless of the single life. We are accustomed in our own day to see it practiced only under military forms, and even there it has been considerably modified by civil standards, so that the world is astounded when it sees, as in the case of the Japanese, the old psychology of the group in full action with its light esteem of the single life.

But in early society it is not only in warfare but throughout life that the individual is subordinated to the group. His every act if it is to be pronounced good must be performed in the customary way, and his very opinions are the common possession of his people. We who are feeling in various ways the ill effects of a long period of *laissez-faire* individualism are naturally returning or trying to return to the more social view of ethics, and to the conception of solidarity as the chief ethical motive.

But the old groups are gone and, living in a welter of cross-classification, it is hard for a man to decide whether his allegiance is due to his race, his nation, his trade-union, his church, or his social stratum.

The Greek, on the other hand, when history begins, was discovering individualism and criticizing custom, not merely this or that custom, but custom in general and as a principle; and the criticism of custom is the beginning of rational ethics. We cannot tell how early the process began. When Archelaus, the last of the Ionic philosophers and the master of Socrates, remarks 'that the just and the base exist not by nature but by convention,' the terms have already a technical ring. At about the same time Democritus, who understood his universe so well, pointed out that 'the institutions of society are human creations, while the void and atoms exist by nature,' a distinction as inconceivable to the savage as to the bee. When remarks like this can be made by different thinkers in different connections, the conception they involve must be well established and generally understood. In Aristotle's time it was hoary with antiquity; it was, says he, 'a universal mode of arguing with the ancients, — namely the opposition of nature and convention.'

The discovery, then, that social and political institutions are made by man and are therefore subject to alteration and adaptation, is one of the great achievements of Hellenism. It is the first law of Greek ethics; and the second is of almost equal importance, for it teaches that in discussing questions of right and wrong, the term 'man' must always be held to mean 'man-in-society.' The *raison d'être* of the state is to cause its citizens to live nobly, and right conduct is the subject-matter of political science. These two principles were never abandoned by Greek ethics

in general. Of course the advance of individualism brought into greater prominence the subjective aspect of ethics, the necessity that the heart should be 'right,' the necessity of faith as well as of works. And certain schools in later days advocated a measure of withdrawal from the world. But self-perfection in isolation was never a Greek ideal, for isolation was in itself immoral by definition.

The notion that the conventional usages and sanctions of conduct were not based on nature led, of course, not only to the searching investigations of serious men but to the paradoxes of the Nietzsches of the fifth century before Christ. 'So entirely astray are you,' says Thrasymachus to Socrates, 'in your ideas about the just and unjust as not even to know that justice and the just are in reality another's good; that is to say, the interest of the ruler and stronger, and the loss of the subject and servant; and injustice the opposite; for the unjust is lord over the truly simple and just: he is the stronger, and his subjects do what is for his interest, and minister to his happiness, which is very far from being their own.'

When the question was thus roundly and uncompromisingly stated, the Greeks set themselves to answer it. So far from showing a deficiency of interest in moral conduct, they may be said without exaggeration to have had no important interests that did not consciously involve the ethical motive. It is held up as a defect in their system of classifying sciences that they had so much difficulty in disentangling morals from politics that even Aristotle declares that 'politics deals with right conduct.' But this difficulty arose from one of their soundest notions, — the loss of which from the world has been a calamity, — the notion, namely, that a state is to be judged not by the number of its inhabitants, for it may easily

have too many inhabitants, nor by its aggregate wealth, for that may be ill-distributed, nor by its success in maintaining order, for a tyrant can maintain order even more readily than can a self-governing body, but by the high type of life lived by its citizens. In other words, if ethics was not detached from politics, it was because politics was saturated with ethics. It is a commonplace that the great historians of Greece, Herodotus and Thucydides, different as they were in temperament and in method, agreed in this, that they were profoundly struck by the moral aspect of political acts. The speeches in Thucydides are full of the theory of international ethics. There is plenty of Macchiavellianism in them, which produces its full psychological effect. When the Athenians in Sicily were trying to secure active support from Camarina, their envoy laid down the maxim that 'to a tyrant or to an imperial city nothing is inconsistent that is expedient.' With the crime of Melos behind them and the flight from Syracuse before, these words have all the grisly, ironic import that formed one of the sources of interest in Greek tragedy.

If politics and ethics, which seem to us to be separate things, were never fully dissociated by the Greeks, because the body-politic had a primarily ethical purpose, it followed that all the other sciences and arts, which were in the service of the state to a degree we can hardly imagine, were also followed with a consciously ethical aim.

To us, who instinctively associate ethics with dogma, it appears that the only safe course for science and art is to keep clear altogether of the ethical question. We remember how strong a resistance the great organized custodians of ethics have presented to the conclusions of natural science, and how disagreeably the nonconformist con-

science is affected by (for instance) the nude in art. It is not unusual for the friends of science and art, when discouraged by these manifestations, to refer with envious yearning to the freedom from ethical bias that surrounded the work of Greek artists and men of science. The truth is of course that it was the absence of dogma only that made Greek art and science free; as for ethics, it was the postulate of their activity. But Greek ethics did not require of a man of science that his results should square with preconceived ideas; it required on the contrary that he should prosecute his task with patience, integrity and courage. The best Greek thought would not have shuddered at the labors of Darwin because one of their by-products might be the weakening of a set of conventional motives for action; it would on the contrary have recognized and applauded the high qualities of self-devotion, persistence, and truthfulness which went to form his method, noting, however, one failing which it would have declared immoral, — the exaggerated use of a single set of faculties which in the long run deadened his responsiveness to the stimuli of literature and art.

The ethical motive was as strong in Greek art as in Greek science. Springing from the religious motive, Greek art always retained the consciousness of a 'purpose,' but this purpose was the simple interpretation of beauty which the Greeks held to be a divine thing and of overwhelming ethical importance. 'Conscientiousness' in the artist's sense was the law of Greek production. The Parthenon is a triumph of character as well as of genius, and from the Parthenon to the shards of water-bottles the remnants of Greek craftsmanship show us hardly a trace of hasty or scamped work.

But over and beyond his standard as a workman there stood in the mind of

the Greek artist his responsibility to the state. He was working, not as the modern artist does, for a little group of connoisseurs, but for a whole people sensitive beyond what we can understand to the stimuli of art. The execution of an important statue was to a Greek city what the installation of a proper water supply is to a modern city, in the fact that it affected everybody. A people thus permeated with ethical ideas would naturally take a keen interest in replying to the fundamental questions asked by the paradoxologists of the fifth century. Socrates in particular devoted his life to answering these questions, and all the answers ever offered from that day to this (except those of jural systems based on supernatural authority) are descended in one way or another from views of his. To the proposition that 'virtue is a convention' he opposed the proposition that 'virtue is a science,' with the corollaries that virtue can be taught and that all sin is ignorance. This theory in various forms underlay all subsequent views of conduct.

Virtue never seemed to the Greeks to be as easy as blind-man's-buff. A man's successful conduct of life was in their view as purely a function of his intellectual faculty as was his success at a game of chess. He who can foresee the greatest number of moves is the best player. If a man could attain omniscience and so behold the relations and effects of an action as they ramify to infinity, he would never act amiss. The wise man is accordingly the good man, and the charming goodness of babes and sucklings is a happy accident, but it is not virtue. An immense responsibility was therefore thrown up-

on education, whose primary aim was to be the moulding of character. And the method of education was to be the formation of reasoned moral habits as a substitute for the unreasoned unmoral habits of primitive man.

The Greeks thus in a very short space of time after they first began to consider the matter systematically, applied to conduct, which in their judgment was not 'three fourths' but four fourths of life, a psychology which the most modern science can but corroborate. 'Consciousness,' says Professor Angell, 'occupies a curious middle ground between hereditary reflex and automatic activities upon the one hand and acquired habitual activities upon the other.' In ethics as in every other field, the Greeks saw first of men that the work of consciousness is never done. No final set of moral habits can ever be established. Changing conditions make any given set inappropriate, and wisdom must be ever occupied with the work of modification. It is in the light of this conception of right conduct as a science and the widest of sciences, capable of being perfectly grasped by omniscience alone, that the doctrine of expediency laid down by the Athenian envoy in Thucydides would make the Greek shudder as he always did before the spectacle of *ὑβρις*, that is of conduct based on insufficient data. The famous 'irony' of Greek tragedy consists in the fact that a character in the play is acting with ignorance or with unwisdom. Every one in the audience knows something, a fact or a principle, which is strongly relevant to his case but of which he is himself unaware. The little ironies of life and the great ironies of history have no other source.



# SOME EARLY LETTERS OF GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

EDITED BY CAROLINE TICKNOR

## I

THERE are, no doubt, as many idealists to-day as there were in the notable epoch which produced Brook Farm and the Concord School of Philosophy. But they are not idealists of the old school.

The new school of idealists contains few poets, and its exponents express themselves in social service of splendid, practical proportions. They are, it is true, persons of 'vision,' but their 'clear sight' reveals to them the coming man as an improved physiological specimen, rather than a newly awakened spirit.

The idealism of which George William Curtis is a most admirable example, was the idealism of the poet; that of to-day is the idealism of the philanthropist. And it is well for us to pause amid the strenuous social conditions which now prevail, for a half-hour's consideration of the more tranquillizing idealism of the old school.

George William Curtis was a true poet; as such, he saw and felt, and he expressed himself in the language of poetry. As a producer of immortal verse, he did not rise to the first rank, although he has bequeathed us some poems of exquisite feeling and workmanship. He did not regard poetry as his vocation, nor did he lay claim to poetic laurels, yet the imprint of his keen poetic sensibilities is stamped on all of his literary work, and the poetic strain echoes through all his silvery oratory.

Curtis was born in Providence,

Rhode Island, in 1824, and he early made up his mind to enter the profession of letters. It has been usual to ascribe the direction of his career to the influence of his juvenile experience at Brook Farm, where he dwelt from 1840 to 1844, but one must not forget that the Brook Farm ideal was in his mind before he joined that Utopian community, which he did at sixteen years of age.

The following correspondence with Mrs. Whitman opens in 1845, the year after Curtis had left Brook Farm. At this period he was a lithe, slender young man, handsome of feature, with blue eyes, wavy brown hair and a most winning smile. His bearing was one of extreme grace and dignity and his manners were those of the natural aristocrat, who treats all his fellow beings with the most exquisite consideration.

The literary career of Curtis began in 1846, when he was but twenty-two years old. Many bright stars were just then in the American firmament. Irving, Dana, Bryant, and Cooper were at the height of their powers. Longfellow, Whittier, and Hawthorne were ascending; the tragic career of Edgar Allan Poe was nearing its close; Holmes was but thirty-seven, and Emerson forty-two.

At this time Sarah Helen Whitman's home in Providence was the literary centre about which revolved the intellectual men and women of her day, and Mrs. Whitman herself was adored as the high-priestess of Poetry and Letters in the distinguished circle of which



she was the most conspicuous ornament. Endowed with beauty, great charm of voice and manner, and a magnetic personality, she drew about her, not only the gifted men and women of her own city, but those from all parts of the world; and Mrs. Browning, writing from Italy, declared that Sarah Helen Whitman was the one woman in America whom she most desired to meet.

Mrs. Whitman's exquisite sonnets to Poe have been pronounced second only to Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, and her best work surely entitles her to the leading place which has been assigned her among the poetesses of New England.

Mrs. Whitman was born in 1803, and in 1828 she married John Winslow Whitman, a Boston lawyer, who died in 1833. Her romantic engagement to Edgar Allan Poe did not occur until 1848, a few months before the latter's death, and was broken off on the eve of marriage, following Poe's appearance at the home of his betrothed in a state of intoxication.

To the end of her life, Mrs. Whitman remained loyal to Poe and to her genuine affection for him, and though she deplored his faults and weaknesses, she looked upon him as a great spirit groping toward the light, a man of brilliant intellect, splendid imagination, and marvelous gift of expression. Herself a poet, she thoroughly appreciated his poetic gift; a critic, she could measure his keen insight into literary values; a mistress of English style, she recognized in his creative touch the master-hand. And when, after his death, Poe's critics and detractors put forth their unjust and bitter denunciations of the man, it was Mrs. Whitman who came forward to champion him with simple dignity, in her little volume entitled *Edgar Poe and his Critics*, of which Curtis wrote in *Harper's Weekly*,

in 1860, it is 'the brave woman's arm thrust through the slide to serve as a bolt against the enemy . . . it is not a eulogy: it is a criticism which is profound by force of sympathy and vigorous by its clear comprehension.'

At the time of her engagement to Poe Mrs. Whitman was forty-five years old and he thirty-nine, but her freshness of spirit and charm of presence must have made her seem by far the younger of the two. Only from the pictures drawn by friends who had known and studied the original can we gather something of the illusive charm and extraordinary fascination which this remarkable woman exerted up to the time of her death, at seventy-five years of age. No one ever associated the idea of age with her, and she is represented as lying beautiful as a bride in death, her brown hair scarcely touched with gray.

Besides having many suitors, Mrs. Whitman had countless warm friends among those men and women who were the intellectual leaders of her day, and with whom she carried on an extensive correspondence in regard to the literary, social, and spiritual movements of the times. She had a peculiar gift of sympathetic appreciation, and was able to give to each that especial response which he, or she, most craved.

The following letters, chosen from a correspondence which extended over a period of fifteen years, speak for themselves and for the two poets whom they concerned. They were accompanied by many pages of verse forwarded by Curtis for Mrs. Whitman's criticism. He was at this time twenty-one and she forty-two.

The first letter, dated at Concord, in April, 1845, reveals the writer keenly enjoying the natural beauties about him, as well as the opportunity to enter into the intellectual life of Hawthorne, Emerson, and others, with

whom Curtis delighted to discuss all that was near his heart concerning the literary life which beckoned him persistently, and the alluring field of poetry, which he at first believed himself peculiarly fitted to enter.

## II

CONCORD, April 9, 1845.

MY DEAR MRS. WHITMAN, —

May I say a few words about poetry and poets to you, hoping so to provoke from you a closer criticism upon my verses than you have yet given me. . . .

It was a great delight to me to find in you the insight into the poetical part of poetry, which I find in so very few persons. That you could realize, as I had so long done without sympathy, that the charm of a poem was not the tho't, nor the melody, but a subtle poetical perception, which gives the character to the tho't, and which from the nature of things, is melodious, and so in its natural expression constitutes poetry. — Shall I say that the poetical sense is so rare among men, so much rarer than the intellectual, that the most approved of the poems of the great masters are not the most poetical? that *As You Like It* is less tho'tful but more purely poetical than *Hamlet*? and that Tennyson is more truly a poet than Wordsworth?

And to the perfect poet belongs this fineness of perception and, of equal necessity, faculty of expression. The prose poets of whom we hear, are men who have the first but not the second, and therefore they are the true audience of the poet and his only critics, as men who have a delicate appreciation of form and color are unworking painters, and so constitute the only valuable spectators of pictures. They cannot be called painters, nor can the first class be called poets.

Byron had the faculty but not the

perception. He did not see things poetically. With Shelley, I think more and more, poetry was an elegant and passionate pursuit. He was too much a scholar. This is seen in the forms his poems took. The principal ones are moulded in the antique Grecian style. With Keats, poetry was an intense life. It was a vital, golden fire that burned him up. Wordsworth is a man of tho't, who gives it a rhythmical form.

Milton would have been more purely a poet, if he had been a Catholic, rather than an ultra Protestant. There is a severity in his poetry, which makes him the favorite of intellectual men, — but is a little too hard — not oriental enough to satisfy poetical men.

In Shakespeare was the wonderful blending — the delicate harmony — but his sonnets would have been credential enough to his fit audience.

Because in this sphere of man the intellect rules, therefore that declares upon all things. Those books are eternal, those poets Olympian whom it crowns. But it is a singular fantasy of Nature, that the intellect is always too intellectual to rightly estimate the value of poetry, which is the higher language of this sphere.

Music, so imperfect here, foreshadows a state more refined and delicate. It is a womanly accomplishment, because it is sentiment, and the instinct declares its nature, when it celebrates heaven as the state where glorified souls chant around the Throne. Poetry is the adaptation of music to an intellectual sphere. But it must therefore be revealed thro' souls too fine to be measured justly by the intellect.

I hope that you will guess my tho't from these fragmentary hints and will answer it and my questions as speedily as you will. Direct simply to me, Concord, Massachusetts.

Truly yours,

G. W. CURTIS.

CONCORD, May 8, 1845.

MY DEAR FRIEND, —

I had attributed your silence to some sufficient reason, like the real one, and your letter, tho' late, was not unexpected and very grateful. I am glad that you ask me to write to you, for in this spring it seems that I must tell all, of the singular beauty that diffuses itself so widely. . . .

This afternoon I paddled out on Walden Pond — a beautiful sheet of water not far away. It was formerly wooded with heavy pine banks to the edge, but recently the woods have been cut from part of the shore. It has a retired, virgin beauty, and not even the railroad, which passes close by one side, can banish its flower of privacy. It is deep and still; and this afternoon the sun toward the setting threw the dark shadows of the pines upon the surface like a mute anthem to the spirits of the lake. Landscapes often impress me like strains of music, and so music gives me a sense of sunniness and gloom, which is more subtle than anything I see. The woods yearn to be dissolved in music, when the wind sings in the trees, and only a wail lingers because it may not be so — or is it a wail because I cannot understand the burthen? The winds that have blown so constantly during the spring fell grievously against my face, as if I was vexed with them, and as if they sighed because I was not of a nature fine enough to be mingled with their triumph. . . .

Recently I have been reading Milton, much. There is a solemn simplicity in the *Paradise Lost*. It is almost too severe. The few classical allusions dropped in the course of the story are like gushes of warm south moisture in the heart of a steady fresh north wind. The poem is bracing like ocean air. . . .

But while the genius of Milton has the grace of stately mountain heights, and the solemn melody of cathedral

music, it seems to lack the delicate aerial grace of folded clouds and the lines of hills in the dim horizon, and the low gushing music of birds disappearing in the sky. His poetry is fuller of rapt serene contemplation, than of subtle sentiment. We ascend to heaven upon angel wings, fanning a majestic melody, but are not wafted thither on the note of a thrush. Must not the organ tone and the thrush singing be blended in the tune of melody, each retaining its own character, and tinged with each other's? Milton's genius is hardly suggestive enough. He was a man made positive by his life and culture. It fell to him as a statesman to speak very decidedly, and the poet could not quite shake off the tone. I should hardly think his nature was very rich, but he had so cultivated and adorned himself, that it was almost as good. Do you remember what Keats says of him?

Sincerely your friend,  
G. W. CURTIS.

CONCORD, June 2, 1845.

I am glad that you speak so truly of Keats. It is rare to find any one who has the just appreciation of his genius. It is of that nature which is too much condemned, or too much praised. And that because either one does not understand him, or if so, the prospect which he opens is the most ravishing to a poet. There lay in him the keenest and most delicate perception and the truest feeling. Tho't was all fused with sentiment. Poetry was to him an element such as music would be to some natures. His blood seemed to thrill, rather than flow thro' his veins, and I always picture him as in ecstasy. But all his life and poetry are hints, they are the rarest tinted leaflets folded close in the bud. If they do not flower, there can be no regret. The influence of such beauty is true and deep, because it was budded beauty and not flowered.

How often, walking in the woods, I have seen a drooping anemone bud which revealed a more delicate grace than the fairest flower. It figures the intensity of feeling which closes the eyes of a lover in the presence of his mistress; yes, and the relation itself which exists between them — a hope, a promise, the morning red before the sunrise. . . .

The essay of Shelley to which you refer, I will look at again. I read it some time since, and was not much pleased generally. I have never seen any prose upon poetry which pleased me much. Sir Philip Sidney's is beautiful to read, so is Emerson's, but I wait. The Poet is still an unexpressed mystery. He is a phantom when you would clutch him, but a beautiful blessing angel when you sit in the shadow of his wings. I look with interest for your article on Mr. Emerson. It is much to be the contemporary, how much to be the neighbor of a man whom I cannot class but with Plato and Bacon, and the other great teachers. I feel that you will speak golden words of him, and I shall be very prompt to tell you what I think of the article.

I spoke to Mr. Hawthorne. He says that Mr. Langley, the publisher, is the business man, that different prices are paid to various authors, and that an engagement should be made previously. There has been some difficulty about the payment of the *Democratic*, I believe, but do not know precisely what. Mr. Hawthorne says, that Mr. O'Sullivan the editor is an honorable man. He values the articles.

Your friend,

G. W. CURTIS.

CONCORD, June 22, 1845.

I have delayed writing until I should have returned from a trip to Wachusett mountain, and until I had read your article. The first I have done, the

second not yet. Knowing that Mr. Emerson had it, I spoke to him of it, regretting that I had not seen it first, to correct some errors of which I had been advised. He was very curious to know the author, for he said tho' it was headed 'By a Disciple,' it was evidently written from a purely independent point, and he seemed to do such excellent justice to it, altho' he said it had the usual vice of kindness, which he says of all reviews of himself, that when he told me he tho't he ought to know who wrote it, I ventured to tell him. I hope I have not done wrong. Henry Thoreau also said it was not by a Disciple in any ordinary sense. It is his copy which is here, and he wishes me to make it as perfect as I can. This week I shall see it, and will then write you.

I went to Wachusett with Mr. Hawthorne and Mr. Bradford. It has long lured me from its post in the western horizon. And as I climbed the green sides, I felt as an artist must feel, who first treads the ground of Italy. . . .

Monadnock was the only single object visible from the summit. It is a rough sharp mountain and Wachusett is rounded and delicate, and the feminine character of the one was in beautiful contrast with the masculine of the other.

It would be a long tale, the history of the beautiful walks we had. My regret was at returning. It seemed proper to go on from mountain to mountain thro' the summer, until winter sent me home again; and to return and find that the hill had relapsed into the old mystery, and was still as wonderful as before, was one of the best results of the journey.

Have you read *Consuelo*, George Sand's novel? I may say great novel, for after *Wilhelm Meister*, I know none superior. It is long but it is a picture of no less genius than Goethe's and

Raphael's. I mean it leaves the same satisfaction. . . .

There are very few copies in the country. I read Mr. Emerson's, for he and Mr. Hawthorne and Miss Fuller first spoke of it.

You shall certainly speak of the manuscripts whenever you choose, altho' they are not good. If you hear any opinion expressed, will you not let me know it, if it be most entire condemnation. I am sure that is my vocation, but I am not sure that I shall effect anything. I must labor very long and very hard before I can come even to the foot of a statue. Perhaps after all my life is only to fill up some chink and the Fates have granted me this versifying talent as a plum for content. My life seems very aimless because I pursue my profession entirely in secret, while outwardly I am abandoned to the sun and wind. That will be good for me; while all the plants are so carefully trained by the gardeners, let one grow in the clear, open air. Yet it is not without pain that I hear those who are very dear to me grieve that I am running to waste. At least, if my life does not justify itself, I am fain to hope they will feel it was meant to be what it was. It seems very bold, but I am sure of it.

I shall write you again very soon if you do not tire of my long letters.

Your friend,

G. W. CURTIS.

*June 28, 1845.*

I read with great delight your article. It is the best I have seen upon Mr. Emerson. I might say that it finds more of a system of philosophy than I think he is conscious of, altho', after all, you only indicate the central tho't which animates his writings, and say such good things of philosophy that it loses that very rigid outline which marks it in the Schools. I am glad that

you treat him as a prophet rather than poet. My feeling about the latter is very strong, and yet few contemporaries write verses which I love so much. I wish you might have seen Mr. E. and Mr. Hawthorne for the last year, casually and at all times, as I have done; that I might know if you would not at last say, the wise Emerson, the poetic Hawthorne. I am going to show some of my verses to the latter. I do not care to do so to the former. And I do it with some trembling, as I did to you, for I feel that he knows what is poetry, and what is poetical,— what is the power of the poet — and what the force of talented imitation.

Your friend,

G. W. C.

*CONCORD, August 6, 1845.*

I returned yesterday from the Berkshire hills, and shall be on the wing again on Friday for the White mountains. There is something inspiring in the mountain air which I have never perceived before. I suppose that one is astonished in such a region that his tho'ts do not at once expand and soar to a corresponding spiritual altitude, but the mountains and the sea are seed too large to ripen their flower very speedily. . . .

I felt very strongly the want of some sound, corresponding to the grandeur of the landscape. That the ocean gives you if you wake at night upon the sea shore, the low murmur of the water presses a sense of its constant presence upon the mind,— in the pause of light conversation, the same sound rises like a vast tho'tful bass to which all tho't should be tuned, and in the rigid silence of the Winter there is no silence there, but a music that deepens and strengthens the stillness. Among the hills when the darkness shuts them from the eye, only the memory can retain them. Awakening after a sleep of



years among them, there would be no presence in the air to suggest them, but awaking near the sea the first consciousness would receive its tone from that.

Yet while the eye could possess them, the hills were very impressive. Mantled with green their strength was subdued to tenderness, so that the influence was, in character, like that of a man of delicate strength and beauty. They folded the valleys with such gentle superiority, as if the world beat on their outer sides with heavy waves in vain. And the sloping sunset light was more soft and striking than I remember to have seen. The sudden dark shades upon the hillsides and the fairy green of the distant bare slopes turned to the West, and pervading all, a singular freshness and glow in the atmosphere made a bath of beauty wherein Diana should have laved and arisen more purely human.

G. W. CURTIS.

CONCORD, *October 1, 1845.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

I hope your long silence portends no illness, at which you hinted in your last letter to me, which I received just as I was on the wing for the White hills, and answered only by a few songs, or has the Autumn which lies round the horizon like a beautifully hued serpent crushing the flower of Summer, fascinated you to silence with its soft, calm eyes? This seems the prime of the season, for the trees are yet full of leaves and thickness and the mass of various color is solid,—before this month is over the woods will grow sere and wan, and so the splendid result of the year becomes its mausoleum. . . .

Yesterday afternoon I sat upon the cliff, a lofty pile of rock, the abrupt end of a hill over the river, and above a wood of birch and pines, and there the wind blew without any hindrance. It

VOL. 114—NO. 3

was a most monopolizing sound. It was not so much the inability to read or write or pursue any peaceable business of that sort which turned me wholly to the wind, but it was a special character in its own tone, which if I had tho't of in the stillest Summer evening would have called me from anything else. The singular magnificent beauty, which had lain all the long warm months so quietly, now breaking up into final splendor and decay, thundered in my ear its wail of death. The water rolled and wrestled in the river, the pine trees bent over the slight birches, withered leaves flew high and sadly in the air, and I the only unmoved, I pushing on to a fuller and fairer maturity, here or somewhere, received upon my face the rush of the wind and in my heart its inward agony. I took off my cap and it streamed thro' my hair. Why could not I bend with the trees and sing as they sang? Far away in the North, the cold, white North, where the Winter lies in wait, lay the outlines of mountains against the gray horizon. The sound of their lonely beauty was like that of the wind. Rugged and grim and dim, and long after the spring sun has drawn the green grass from out the winter, here they will still be white with snow.

When the sun set, the wind died. Then the silence was more mournful than the sound,—like the air thro' which a dirge has just passed, which still cherishes the soul of its sadness. I came slowly home thro' the woods. The crickets sang as usual, the trees stood steady and still. Jupiter arose in the east—Mars and Saturn in the southeast; and the earth swung noiselessly with them as if the stars, so pure and cold and steadfast, should not hear its wail or suspect a grief.

And so will each day be, each more desperate, till there are no leaves to sigh and rustle upon the trees or fly in



the air, and the waves are chained, and the splendor quenched by the rigid winter. Yet soft warm days now and then, and the brief, beautiful Indian summer, will show that there are more summers in store. . . .

Thro' the summer Mr. Hawthorne had the 'Orpheus'—the smaller long poem, and some of the smaller verses. It was most grateful to me to hear him say what he did, for I have great faith in his perception. 'The Poet' I did not show him. The 'Orpheus' he thinks may be corrected and improved by correction, which I felt when you suggested something of the same sort before. I will do that during the autumn or winter.

Concord loses very much to me in his final departure, which takes place to-morrow, Friday. He is a fountain of deep, still water, where the stars may be seen at noon.

Mr. Emerson is writing lectures upon Plato, Goethe, Swedenborg, Montaigne, and Shakespeare.

I have been most of the day with Ellery Channing, whom I like very much. If I was to remain here thro' the winter I should know him much better than I ever have, for I have seen him very little, since I have lived here.

I am not afraid of silence in my friends, so you shall write only when you care and can.

Your friend,

G. W. CURTIS.

### III

The month of November finds the young poet in New York, recalling regretfully the pastoral surroundings of Concord, and endeavoring to adjust himself to the whirl and bustle of the city where the 'muse' flourishes under difficulties and poets pine for solitude.

Some two months later he writes from the same place that he has been

invited to join Ellery Channing in a trip to Italy, an unexpected proposition which may be looked upon as a milestone in the career of Curtis, whose first important literary contribution sprang from this ideal sojourn in the old world.

NEW YORK, *November 27, '45.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

I always feel lonely when I first come to N. Y. for such constant and vigorous labor outlaws one whose path lies elsewhere. . . . I grow thin and pale here. Everything that men do seems so small. Their life is a card-house built over the eternal gulf. And the priests, the ministers of the soul, are not as I dreamed, care-worn and wasted like devoted physicians in a plague-stricken city, but comfortable and smiling men,—and as I sit in the warm church richly painted and gilded and cushioned and the smooth voice utters smoothly what the man believes, for I do not question his sincerity, then the history of men in the past and the daily history of the world and of the city where we are, the woe, the misery, the wordless despair of thousands, rushes upon my mind, and by the unspiritual face of the preacher, I see the thorn-crowned head of Jesus and the features pale with sorrow for sin, not with agony for suffering, and looking with eyes too sad for tears upon the silent audience, imploring the priest to speak as to men who are wandering and waiting and looking for the peace to which the necessity of life drives them, and which is the crown of flowers for their bloody hours. Then bursts in the organ and the flowing, gushing, soothing music lifts me above the crowd like celestial wings, and the face I see becomes milder and softer, more beautiful as the melody is finer and fuller, and peace, deeper than sorrow, bathes it like dew, and it fades from my sight as the music swells, as stars fade in the

morning, and in the wavering, dying, permeating sound, I feel the soul of that heavenly beauty. . . . I study Italian vigorously 3 hours a day. I read German and French about 2, and just now Swedenborg and Festus occupy the rest of my leisure. I find Time, the true 'celestial Railroad.' At Jno. Dwight's request I wrote an account of the Symphony of Mendelssohn's for the *Harbinger*. It will be entitled 'Music in New York.' It is the hardest thing in the world to write about music, for the best part of the impression is so evanescent and delicate, tho' deep, like the influence of sunset clouds: one wants to dip his brush in them if he must paint them.

NEW YORK, February 6, 1846.

MY DEAR FRIEND, —

What should surprise me the other day like a bird flying into the midst of the winter silence, but a proposition from Ellery Channing for us to accompany himself and George Bradford to Italy in May, and there pass a year? I tho't at once that I could not go, as a lover looks coldly upon the mistress whom he adores, but I found that the direct proposal had kindled the long dormant spark into a flame, and that sooner or later it would elevate me to that soft celestial atmosphere, which spiritually and physically belongs to Italy. Burrill leans upon his hand and thinks intently about it. He wants to postpone, to study the language more thoroughly, to read the history of the country, until every stone and tower shall tell readily what it is and has been. But I seldom think about things. A proposition comes to my mind and is ripened into action without any influence wilfully upon my part, like a nest-egg hatched by the sun and not by the parental warmth. So this idea of Italy lies cooking, and what the issue will be is not at all certain. I think it very

doubtful if we go in the spring. If we do not, we shall lose our party which is so pleasant to my fancy, but we shall gain a better knowledge of the language than we have now. If I went I should regard it as a preparation for going again hereafter, and yet I feel as if I should be very unwilling to come home again when once there.

Since Ellery's letter came I have been reading Saddle books and Italian travel. Shelley's letters from Italy please me very much. They are so full of delicate appreciation of the country and all its influences. He was so finely wrought that it seems the air must have passed into his frame and mingled many a golden secret with his being, which no tongue can utter and no coarser nature feel. There was a spiritual voluptuousness in his nature which Italy alone could satisfy, and which constituted in him so much of his poetical feeling and fancy. The same thing was in Keats, but in him more fiery and intense. It sucked up his whole being at times, so that its expression syllabled fire and passion, as in the invocation to the moon in *Endymion*. In Shelley it was less ardent and never of that fierce lavishness which it was in Keats. . . .

The Muse knows not these brick walls, I have written scarcely a line since I have been here, and have left the 'Orpheus' and the long poem I read you for alteration and re-formation in the summer. I have meant to copy some portions for you and will do so.

You will find it hard to read this but I always write fast about Keats.

Your friend,

G. W. C.

N.Y., January 20, '46.

MY DEAR FRIEND, —

You will have seen from my last letter that I did not sympathise with Miss Fuller's view of Cromwell, but I tho't

her review of Longfellow one of the best things that I ever saw of hers. How is it that we differ so much, for you say while those on Cromwell were among her best, those upon Longfellow were among the worst. She seemed to me to give him with great tenderness and consideration and due appreciation his just place. She did not abruptly say, 'you are no poet,' but having expressed her views of poetry and the poet, measured him by it. He failed by that [measure], as he has long ago by mine and by that of his best friends, and those most calculated to appreciate him, one of whom told me he was sorry for Mr. Longfellow, for he did not seem to understand that his popularity must so soon abate, nor had he courage and character enough to sustain the consciousness when it should come. His verses are pleasing to me, but I see a thousand old Teutons looking thro' his eyes and giving them the light they have. Very many seem translations from the German; the imagery and the circumstances are not his own, but are pleasant to him from association and study. Miss Fuller's criticism of imagery I think unjust. It is overflowing another and drowning him in her individuality; but in the main I should say with her, that Mr. Longfellow is an elegant scholar, a man of good taste and delicate mind, who is fluent and sweet, but writes from a vein of sentiment which is not sound, and is too little inspired to write anything important.

You speak of Poe's article upon Miss Barrett. I should much like to see anything really good of his. With the exception of his volume of poems I know nothing of him save a tale in one of the reviews a month ago, which was only like an offensive odor. There seems to be a vein of something in him, but if of gold he is laboring thro' many baser veins, and may at last reach it. In one

of the foreign reviews I found a recent article upon Miss B. It was on the whole just, altho' I am struck with the utter want of sympathy between critics and their prey. This review disposed of the lady as a jockey disposes of horses. And yet I love to have those whom I love pass thro' this coldest ordeal and show that they have something for it. If the diamond in the head does not show itself to such critics, at least they rejoice in the brightness of the eyes. My love must be so beautiful that the blind can rejoice, themselves feeling the perfect form.

I love Shelley so much and am so much indebted to him for pleasant hours that it seems cruel to deny him the name which was evidently his dearest dream and hope to possess. And yet it was finely said to me once, after I had unconsciously perceived the same thing, 'Reading Shelley is like searching for gold dust in shining sand.' It is perpetually suggested to you but never found. He seems to want an infinite background, his poems are not stars against the depthless sky. But they are bright and beautiful and if he is not so much to me as he once was, he is still a dove in 'heaven's sweetest air.' You probably liked Miss Fuller's notice of him. It expressed a great debt. . . .

I think we have no right to complain that the breath of God is stayed, in a century which has borne Napoleon, Washington, Swedenborg, Goethe, and Beethoven. If you observe the programme of Mr. Emerson's lectures, out of six great men whom he finds in history, three are from his own century. I am reading Chaucer too, and dashed thro' the *Countess of Rudolstadt*, the sequel to *Consuelo*, last week. It is not so sunnily beautiful as that, altho' a fine work. A life of Mozart I found interesting, also some tragedies of Ford's.

So I drift, and toward every flower which attracts me, I turn my boat.

Have you read *Margaret*? It is a book of great and peculiar interest. One of the most original books I have met for a long time, altho' it is very long and thick, to read. And the character of *Margaret* does not develop so perfectly as I expected from the beginning. I have flooded you with my *Biographia Literaria*; if you escape undrowned and have vigor left, let me hear from you soon.

Your friend,  
G. W. C.

NEW YORK, May 2, 1846.

MY DEAR FRIEND, —

I hope the spring brings you health as well as pleasure. Although I suppose there must be an intense sadness in the beauty, when we do not have in ourselves the health which is the first condition of beauty. But I always think that when the spring comes and those whom the winter has imprisoned can once more walk in the green fields and smell the fresh flowers, fresh and wonderful always, altho' every year brings the same, they will then regain the lost treasures in the fragrance all around them. A walk yesterday in the late afternoon, and twilight, quite beyond the city where I could hear the frogs and the home-flying and twittering birds, and see a short lane stretching thro' a green border of bushes and grass, and losing itself against woods beyond, lifted me entirely out of my winter life, unlocked all the fountains of spring feeling, and gave me the feeling of surprise and delight, which every season awakens.

It is a great thing that Nature always appears so perfect and novel to us. Even the best of men do not do so. They do not seem to have an infinite richness altho' that may be because we too are human, and that we can never be, or, rather, are never so simply related to other human beings. And yet

as if to show the real superiority of a real man, an artist of genius shows us on his canvas the landscape that we loved, arrayed in a more subtle and delicate beauty than we have ever seen upon it, because his genius is a finer glass than our common perceptions and he gives us the representation of that.

This winter I have been more really interested in art than ever before, and probably the longer a man lives in the country, the finer will be his taste and appreciation of whatever is good in art, because Nature is the basis and nurse of the grandest art, which is surely not a copy or imitation, but while it is faithful to the minutest detail of Nature, is a reproduction of it thro' the genius which sees the inner meaning and beauty of the natural image and so presents it in a serener and more graceful form. This is true perhaps only of parts, for was there ever a picture which satisfied one as a beautiful face or landscape does? I certainly ought not to say it, for even now I am writing some little verses where 'the Painter who paints best' and 'the sculptor of most skill' are the sun and moon. . . .

I shall probably not write you from New York for a long time, as I shall go up the river to-morrow and pass a few days with the Cranches at Fish-kill and soon after go to the East. We shall probably sail on the 1st of August, for the ship which sails in September is not a good one. Our French and Italian quarters are over, and I feel quite at home in the speaking of the former. Practice will perfect the latter.

I shall see you in Providence in the summer, altho' I feel I shall not have much to show for the long time since I saw you last.

Truly your friend,  
G. W. C.

CONCORD, *June 12, 1846.*

Shall we not one day be of so delicate a perception, that we can catch the secret of this summer air which now flows by us so alluringly and silently? Often in the midst of beautiful days and places it seems to me there is some fairy revelry proceeding all around me, which I cannot appreciate, and which comes to me as sadness and longing, like the echo of festal music saddened by distance. Often walking homeward from the village in the moonlight, I wish for wings to move silently and not disturb the repose of the night, by my echoing footsteps. To tread as softly as the dew falls, to speak in cadences like the whisper of leaves and the gushing of brooks, to feel in our lives, not only the superior possibility, but the real depth and delicacy, which lies around us in Nature, — is a tho't that often haunts me. How cold we are when we meet, how reserved, how proud. Even the warmest, tenderest hearts are crushed by a weight of self-consciousness. Everybody should be a messenger of beauty for the soul that follows, like the long-haired beautiful heralds sent before the Heroes of Gods of old, and yet we cannot sit gracefully, scarcely comfortably, in our chairs.

The landscape is so gentle and beautiful here and I am so pleasantly situated with some old Brook Farm friends, hearty, homely and quiet people, that I am sorry my summer is not to be passed here. Already I feel how sorry I shall be when I must really say good-bye and separate from all I know, for even Burrill will not go with me, but has the best reasons for remaining in America. It will be a crisis in my life in various ways, and I have a singular curiosity about the influence of Europe upon myself. . . . Association and art, and an indefinable individuality of external Nature constitute my charm for Italy, and with a general reading one

has all the material ready. As the time comes, it seems to me as if I looked more closely, almost more tenderly upon our country here, — the landscape I mean. Nature is such a splendid mute bride, whose lips we constantly watch expecting to see them overflow with music, with melodious explanations of all that her beauty has hinted and nourished. . . . To-day in a newspaper I chanced to see a poem of Bryant's, an old one I think, called 'June.' The end is remarkably fine, — you will remember it: speaking of his grave made in June and of all that he would wish to have around it, and those he would wish to come, he concludes of himself,

Whose part in all the pomp that fills  
The circuit of the Summer hills,  
Is — that his grave is green.

That seems to me very fine. Bryant interested me very much as I saw him occasionally in the winter. I did not know him personally, but his head is so rocky and strong and commanding. I realize more than ever the transparent simplicity and sincere beauty of his poetry. It is like buttercups and daisies, which we are apt to disregard and yet which give a deeper beauty to the landscape and are fed with all the hues and airs of heaven.

I have read a good deal of Browning, but neither 'Paracelsus' nor 'Sordello.' The 'Bells and Pomegranates' are full of richness and luxuriant imagination. What says Miss Barrett about them, 'cut down deep in the middle,' 'blood veined,' or something like it? I do not know any poetry now which seems to show that a keen, rushing sense of life tingles to the very finger tips of the poet as this does. It is only too wild, too salient. . . . Browning, as you will suppose, is often clumsy and obscure, but always real, he always holds fast to his tho't, whether it is a good one or a bad one and never sacrifices it to anything. A poet never



should do that, but also he should never be necessitated to do it. He speaks in numbers for the numbers come.

Do you observe how, in speaking of men of genius, we incline to measure them by the standard of entire genius, forgetting that every such man has but a ray, and makes beautiful only what that ray shines upon? I have been very much amused by several persons saying that Ellery Channing could not be a true poet, because he went to Europe and left his wife as he did. They tho't of the great perfect man, whom we choose to call poet, and who is supposed to fulfill all the duties of life as well as he sings, while Ellery is a selfish, indolent person (tho' a good deal more and better) who certainly does write good poetry. It is a terrible situation for them. They have hitherto perhaps tho't him a poet, but the true poet — would he have done so? Aut Cæsar aut nihil. Good night, I hope I have not wearied you by so long a talk, if so, you must take it by easy stages, as we used to read Xenophon did — the only Greek fact I remember. . . .

*Sunday.* A soft genial day, the flower of June weather as June is the flower of the year. By chance I laid my hand upon Whittier's Poems, a book I always have by me on Sundays. . . . Did you know that Ida Russell is very intimate with Whittier, so that I have sometimes heard that they were engaged. She pointed him out to me once, in an Anti-Slavery convention. He is a thin man, with a sad almost sharp face, and dark hair. He moved silently and lonelily among the crowd, and seemed like a strain of his poetry impersonized. Mr. Hawthorne told me that he came to see him once, and he was much pleased with his quiet manner.

I have written to ask Mr. H. to go to Monadnock mountain with me this

week, but I am afraid his duties, for he is a Custom house officer, will not permit.

Here I am at the end of my paper, and yet I could say a great deal more. I wish we were sitting together on some shady bank of the Seekonk, and gliding down the sunny hours with conversation as simple and natural as its course, not so anxious for tho't as gentle union with the feeling and the silence of the day. The Sabbath feeling, I shall not have in Italy; that will be one of the great changes or the great losses. Do you remember in *Margaret* the description of a Sunday morning in June? I shall go from Concord by the first of July and be in Providence a week or two afterwards. If you can, write; if not, farewell until I see you.

Your friend,

G. W. C.

PROVIDENCE, July 25, 1846.

MY DEAR FRIEND, —

I am sorry not to see you this afternoon, but as I could have remained but a few moments it is perhaps as well, but a warm shake of the hand is better than this.

Good-bye, for that is all that I have to say. I owe you more than I can say, . . . Farewell and may all good angels bless you.

Your friend,

GEORGE WM. CURTIS.

With the conclusion of this letter, the early phase of Curtis's career is closed, and having passed this milestone, he enters that wider sphere in which his future activities are to be so successfully employed.

His correspondence with Mrs. Whitman, which was later renewed, was continued at intervals for many years. He ever turned with unfailing confidence to consult his early friend in regard to his later literary work, and in



1860, one finds him appealing to her judgment when he writes: —

'Tell me "certain true" whether *Trumps* is worth publishing as a book?'

Throughout his life, Curtis retained those characteristics which are so clearly outlined in his early letters, namely his sentiment, his love of music and of nature, his worship of art and beauty, and his chivalrous attitude toward all

mankind. His early promise was amply fulfilled, even though it failed to blossom primarily in the poetic field, and he must ever remain in the eyes of posterity, what his friend Winter has pronounced him: —

'The illustrious orator, the wise and gentle philosopher, the serene and delicate artist, the incorruptible patriot, the supreme gentleman.'

## CHRIST'S TABLE

BY MARGARET PRESCOTT MONTAGUE

O CHRIST! O Christ! The *hands!* The eager hands,  
The tired hands! The praying tragic grip  
Of fingers on the rail! The speechless lip  
That moving cries and cries its sore demands!  
We come, O Christ, in trooping wistful bands,  
With yearning hearts and thirsty souls to sip;  
We kneel, we wait, we pray, in fellowship  
Of need — Lord Christ! *One* glimpse of Promised Lands!

It comes — the whispered word, the cup, the tray,  
My Body and my Blood, the Bread, the Wine.  
The hands receive, the lips accept. We pray —  
*O Christ!* We *pray!* . . . Peace and be still. The line  
Moves on . . . Forgive, O! Lord! forgive to-day  
The tortured flesh that faithless craved a sign!

# ENGLISH AS HUMANE LETTERS

BY FRANK AYDELOTTE

THE non-academic part of the world, which in spite of the growth of the state universities is still a large part, takes great delight in the notion of the college graduate, trained in the lore of history, the mysteries of science, and the graces of poetry, wearing out his shoe-leather in a vain search for a job. The joke, or the fact behind it, has made its impression on the trainers of the college youth, so that in every centre of learning one finds eager effort to make our education practical. A certain amount of the same kind of talk is to be heard in England, even at Oxford, but less of it, for the simple reason that English education of the last few generations, however remote it may seem in its methods, has been obviously practical in its results. Oxford and Cambridge men have ruled brilliantly the greatest empire in the world, they have given England one of the most democratic governments and almost the cleanest politics on earth, they have played their part with credit in business and in every profession.

Until quite recently Oxford education took its tone and character mainly from training of one kind — the course in the classics which the University calls *Literæ Humaniores* and which the undergraduates call 'Greats.' It is this training which has made the young Englishman an educated man, has given him efficiency in the practical world, and has made him above all else a gentleman. To-day Oxford is undergoing a gradual change, the most marked feature of which is the expan-

sion of the curriculum; but the school of classics still retains its prestige in spite of the invasion of other studies. The reason for its prestige and for its greatness is apparent in the nature of the course.

The work of the course divides readily into two parts. The first, which corresponds roughly to our American 'classical course,' is a careful study of the principal Greek and Latin poets, orators, and dramatists. The second and more important part is a thorough study of the classic historians and philosophers, including both but laying stress upon the one or the other as the undergraduate chooses. The study of Greek philosophy includes the study of modern philosophy as well. Taken as a whole *Literæ Humaniores* is a study not merely of the æsthetic qualities of Greek and Latin literature but of Greek and Roman thought, and as such it offers the undergraduate what it is no exaggeration to call the key to modern civilization.

Probably no training in modern literature can be made to equal this in intellectual value. However that may be, any very extensive study of the classics is apparently impossible in America. The tide has been flowing in the direction of the moderns, and while it may turn back again, in all likelihood it will not soon. English literature is for us what the classics were to our grandfathers in this country and in England, and as perhaps the greatest modern literature, it has, aside from the question of language, one obvious

advantage over the classics as a means of popular education: it is permeated with the modern spirit, it is a record of modern thought, it deals directly with the intellectual problems and the conditions which face us, with the world as it has been refashioned by Christianity and modern science. The popularity of the study of English may be due partly to coeducation, but it is also due partly to this fact.

The popularity of the study of English, however, need not blind us to the very unsatisfactory nature of its results. Whatever good things it may do for our undergraduates it does not teach them to think, does not offer them any severe intellectual discipline; it is not a good course for the man to take who wants to develop that power of sane, keen thinking which is the distinguishing mark of a liberal education.

This fact is even more apparent in the case of the students who give their attention mainly to *belles-lettres*, to the appreciation of literature, than in those who confine themselves to philology or literary history. The popular outcry against linguistics and source-hunting does not go to the root of the matter. Among English professors and English students alike are many able men who have sought in philology and in the history of literature something solid, something of real intellectual value, something 'to bite on,' which they could not find in courses in literary 'appreciation.' And for that point of view there is this justification, that most of the graduates from our literary courses who are comparatively free from philology, and are not at all absorbed in the *minutiae* of literary history, are lamentably deficient in power of thought, in the ability to understand literature—woefully lacking in real literary interests. Literary power is power to think and power to feel in the sense in which feeling becomes il-

lumination and yields a result similar to the result of thought. This illumination our training in English literature seems somehow not to give.

There are of course many shining exceptions to what is here said, but the above is on the whole a fair statement of the fact, and it is a fact to be very seriously considered. Since we have in this country no immediate prospect of a return to the classics as the vehicle of general literary education, and since English literature is daily becoming a more and more popular subject, the question of all questions for us is how to make of it a liberal study. The question is not pedagogical in the sense in which that word is usually understood; it is really literary: what are the more humane and what the less humane aspects of English letters?

The obvious answer, if my analysis of the reasons for the effectiveness of the Oxford course in the classics is sound, is to make our study of English literature a study of English thought. When we treat English authors as mere entertainers whose business it is to provide elegant amusement for our idle hours, we are guilty of a misconception as to the meaning of literature which is denounced specifically or implicitly by every great critic in our language, and which is certain to prevent all or almost all the possible good results of our study. The answer is to get entirely away from that theory of literature and to realize that the poets and novelists and essayists are men who are trying to unify and explain life to us, and to give us the zest for it which their divine vision has brought to them. We must face literature squarely, recognize in it a record of the meaning of our civilization, and, without confusing it for a moment with history or philosophy, give full weight to its historical and social and philosophical bearings. Finally, in order to give our students

any love of literature which will be more serious than an idle flirtation, we must make plain to them that their first business is not to 'appreciate' but to understand.

It may seem self-evident, that the value of the work of any great man of letters lies in the record of what may be called, in the wide sense explained above, his thought about life; and that the student must have some idea of this before he will know how to read profitably, and before the study of literary history or of the technique of any literary form can have for him much meaning. However self-evident such an idea may seem, it is constantly ignored. We go on teaching the history of literature and the technique of literary forms to our students before they have any elementary notions of the significance of literature itself, which alone would make such study profitable. We talk about the 'style' of this author and that, paying scantiest attention to his ideas, omitting the substance to contemplate the form. However tortuous and super-subtle the lore of our subject may seem from other points of view, in this sense it is superficial. The one treatment of English literature which would give the study of it literary value or make it a part of a liberal education is that treatment which lays emphasis primarily on what English authors have to say about life, what were the problems of life which they were trying to solve, what to them were its mysteries and its meaning. To talk frankly and thoughtfully about these questions, to get to the bottom, to make our teaching the expression of what we really believe about the deepest things of life, — the things about which the poets are talking, — to do this most of us are either too lazy or too *blasé*.

Much of our greatest English literature is read by the American under-

graduate, if at all, not in the English department, but in the department of philosophy or sociology or history or theology or the fine arts. We have gradually narrowed the content of our literary courses until we have little left except descriptions of nature, love stories, and lyrics. The habit of using books filled with brief selections from a large number of authors prevents the student from getting any clear and complete notion of what any English man of letters was really trying to say. The study of the development of literary forms has crowded out the study of literary thought. We give years to the study of 'style' in courses which, in their selection of illustrative reading, tacitly deny that definition of style which is always on our lips. If the style is of the man, can we not perhaps understand its secret better by studying the man himself, by placing our attention less upon externals and more upon his thought?

Such a study of English literature would demand much more, both of instructor and student, than is usually demanded at present. It would demand hard and careful thinking, it would reach out into domains of thought which our habit of rigid departmental specialization has led us to believe we have no business to enter. It would involve consideration of the thought of other nations which has influenced our own intellectual leaders. It would mean the acquisition of some conception of that complex body of thought which we know as western civilization, and, in the case of our keenest students, it would lead eventually to a study of the classics as well.

Such a study of English literature would remove the reproach of formalism and shallowness which we deserve at present because of our too exclusive preoccupation with metaphysical falsities about style and about the

'evolution' of literary forms. It would mean a study of men and of currents of thought rather than of separate lyrics and 'minor poems,' selected and printed in textbooks because of their convenience for separate assignment and class-discussion. It would mean attempting less and doing it better; keeping undergraduate study to a few important men and a few influential movements, instead of spreading it over the whole history of English literature from Beowulf to Bridges. The undergraduates would be distinctly better off if they heard less about minor eighteenth-century poets and minor Elizabethan dramatists, and instead read more of Bacon and more of our great nineteenth-century thinkers on social and religious and scientific questions. Literature, so taught, would become a more thoughtful, a humaner, a more really literary study, and its students would be in a position to apprehend better the meaning of the glib-formula, 'Literature is a criticism of life.'

Not the least of the benefits from such a change in attitude would be a change in the form and content of undergraduate essays. We should have fewer light and airy descriptions, fewer inane stories, fewer self-conscious apings of Lamb and Stevenson, and in

their place more serious efforts to say what a certain book or poem or paragraph or phrase means when one thinks about it. The result would be that many problems of English composition would solve themselves, and the subject (as a separate study) would probably disappear from our universities, to the great relief and advantage of all concerned. We should need all the student's writing as a test and record of his understanding of what he read.

Of course if English literature were really made a thoughtful study with the majority, many of its votaries who seek in it merely a graceful accomplishment or the means of being wafted up to a degree on flowery beds of ease, would be driven away. In the survivors we might look for results which we do not find at present: an adequate mastery of a few books and a few questions, some real comprehension of the significance of literature, some genuine intellectual interests, and, above all, capacity for thought which, as it is the one result of education really to be called practical, is also the one literary quality. So pursued, the study of English letters might become, if not equal in value to the study of the Greek and Roman classics, at any rate a more humane pursuit.

## A LITTLE MOTHER

BY FLORENCE GILMORE

I HAD been on the train for hours and was very tired. All morning I had seen only a level, thinly wooded country, never beautiful or picturesque. The magazine with which I had armed myself, fondly imagining that it would be a protection against the tedium of a six-hour trip, had proved dull to a degree that defies expression. There was no one to talk to, for the only other passengers were a fat woman who slept most of the time, and, when she was awake, read a novel and languidly munched peanuts, and four traveling salesmen who harped on boots and shoes and notions until I became so weary listening to them that I firmly resolved that, come what might, I would never again use any of the things they sold.

At one o'clock, having finished my luncheon, I sank back in my seat and looked out of the window, thinking irritably how I must be bored for another hour. The train was then standing at a country station exactly like thirty or forty others we had passed during the morning. What looked to be the same stiff-legged station-master was hurrying back and forth; the same shabbily dressed men loafed about; the same small boys ran hither and thither in every one's way; the same young girls giggled, and nudged one another, and giggled again.

Turning from my window with a long-drawn sigh, I saw that a little girl had got on the train and was taking the seat across the aisle from mine. What impressed me most in that first

glance was her quaint primness. Her hair hung down her back in the neatest of long braids, and was fastened with the neatest of small black bows. Her stiffly starched gingham dress was spotless and her gloves looked like new. She had a sweet, round, rosy little face, but it was graver than any other child's I have ever seen. Watching her, I wondered if she ever played, if she ever broke her toys and tore her clothes and forgot to do the things she had been told but a moment before, like many, many, dear, naughty little girls I know.

Interested by the quaintness of the child, I reopened my magazine and watched her from behind it. As soon as she was seated she carefully arranged her belongings on the seat facing her: a satchel, a box, and a large apple. She took off her hat, and spying a newspaper which I had thrown aside, asked me for it. 'Perhaps the dust would spoil the flowers,' she said. 'I don't like to run the risk.'

I asked her a few questions then. She was not shy, and was evidently inclined to be friendly, for as soon as she had disposed her belongings to her satisfaction, she crossed the aisle and sat beside me.

'I want to keep my hat as nice as new, because mamma trimmed it herself. Papa and I think it is the beautifullest hat we have ever seen. We are very proud of it. You see, mamma is sick all the time. She can't even sew except once in a great while. She has awful pains, and she is weak, and can



hardly ever get out of bed, so papa and I are very good to her and take care of her all we can. She says we spoil her, but she's only joking, don't you think so? It's only children that get spoiled, is n't it?

I said that I believed so; and after a moment, to break the silence that followed, I asked her if she had any brothers and sisters. I felt certain that she had not. She would have been less staid had she been accustomed to the companionship of other children.

'I had three brothers,' she answered, 'but they all died before I was born, and two little sisters — twins; and they died when they were just one hour old.' She looked puzzled after she had said this and an instant later she corrected herself: —

'The twins really were n't old at all; they were just — just one hour *young*.' And having settled this point to her satisfaction, she looked into my face and added seriously, 'I have often thought about it. I believe that when my brothers and sisters came they did not like it here, so God did n't make them stay, but took them straight to heaven.'

'And you liked it, and did stay,' I said, drawing my conclusion from her premises.

'I? Oh, I like it pretty well. Sometimes things are inconvenient, and they're often uncomfortable, but it is n't bad if you have people to be good to.'

She lapsed into silence after this, and resting her chin on her hand stared thoughtfully through the window. Eager to hear more of her strange little thoughts, I racked my brain for something to say, and at last, nothing startling or original suggesting itself, I asked, 'Have you been long away from home?'

'For four weeks. Mamma got so sick she had to be taken to a hospital,

and then papa sent me to stay at grandma's.'

'And of course she has been spoiling you — after the manner of grandmothers!' I said, smiling.

The child looked doubtful, and made no direct answer. After a time she explained in her quaint, decided way, —

'Mothers and grandmothers are different. Grandmothers give little girls cookies and they don't tell them to go to bed at half-past seven; but they have n't such good ways of tucking people in bed, and their kisses are n't the same.'

'I did n't know until yesterday that I was going home to-day,' she went on after a scarcely perceptible pause. 'I had a hard time to get presents for mamma. I had made two daisy chains; they were ready; and all day yesterday I was trying to think of some other things that would be nice and could n't make her tired. Papa and I always try not to let her grow tired, but she often does, anyhow.'

She crossed the aisle, and getting the box I had noticed when she entered the car, opened it and proudly displayed two chains of withered daisies, a bird's egg wrapped in cotton, several picture cards, and a stiff, new cotton handkerchief with a gorgeous border. 'All these are for her!' she said. 'The daisies have faded but she won't mind that. I know, because once before I made her a daisy chain and it withered before I got home, but she liked it as it was. She really liked it very much. She told me so, and even if she had n't I could have told from the way she smiled. A big boy gave me the bird's egg. Then, I had a nickel grandma gave me last week, and for a long time I could n't decide whether to buy this handkerchief or a pin with a diamond in it; but papa gave her a pin on her birthday and she's never had any kind of handkerchiefs except plain white

ones; that's what decided me. This one is very pretty, don't you think so?'

I blinked at the flaming colors and murmured something noncommittal.

The child hardly paused for breath before she continued her quaint chatter. She loved to talk, and as I was only too glad to have some one — any one — to listen to, all went well.

'It seems a long time since I left papa and mamma. I can hardly wait to see them. I was never away from home before. Do you think she's well enough to beat the station? She's been at a hospital, you know, and papa says that a hospital's a place where they make people well.'

I told her not to count on finding her mother grown quite strong in so short a time.

'Is n't it wonderful how things happen just when you don't expect them to!' she exclaimed, not heeding my warning in the least. 'When I got out of bed yesterday morning I did n't know I was going to see her and papa so soon! I was just throwing them a kiss from my window when grandma called me. She had been crying, and she told me that papa wanted me at home. I suppose it was because she was going to lose me that she cried. I'd been *very* good to her. But I did n't feel a bit like crying. I was glad all inside of me. And by and by Mrs. Dodge, who knew mamma when she was no bigger than I am, she came to see grandma and they talked and talked, and she cried too. I saw her. I think she must have caught the tears from grandma like I did the measles from our butcher's little boy.'

As she chattered my heart grew heavy. I understood that her mother was dead; buried, too, no doubt. Poor motherless child! Poor, poor child! And she had no suspicion of the truth. She was all eagerness, all hope.

When we reached R—— we got off

the train together, but the moment she caught sight of her father she forgot my existence. I looked at him with keen, sympathetic interest. He appeared to be almost fifty years of age. His face was kindly and rather handsome. He lifted his little girl into his arms and almost smothered her with kisses; then they walked away, hand in hand, and I lost sight of them in the crowd. I was not sorry. I wondered how he *could* tell her.

Ten minutes later, having attended to my baggage, I passed out of the station and saw them again. The father had lifted the child on the low stone wall that runs along that side of the building, and was talking to her, gently and seriously. Her big eyes were fastened on his and great tears were pouring unheeded over her cheeks. She still held her apple. The box was tucked under one arm, but the lid was gone and the precious daisy chains were hanging out of it. She did not see me, and I hurried past them.

My car was long in coming, and feeling restless I walked a square or two and let it overtake me. When I seated myself in it I found to my regret that I was face to face with the father and child. She was as pale as he now; her hat hung uncherished at the back of her neck, and from time to time tears rolled down her cheeks. I have never seen another face bespeak such utter desolation.

Her father held one of her hands tightly clasped in his, but for some minutes neither of them spoke. Once or twice she did try to ask him something, but although she opened her lips, no sound came.

At length he said gently, 'You'll have to be very good to me now, Ruth. There's no one else to take care of me.'

She looked up at him then. Her eyes brightened a little and a faint smile spread slowly over her tear-

stained face. 'Yes, papa,' she answered, with a little motherly air; and sighed, and snuggled closer to him.

After a second she spoke again, rather more briskly, 'You'd better eat this apple right away. You have n't had your dinner, and it's afternoon.

You might get sick, if you are n't more careful.'

He took the apple and obediently tried to eat some of it, and Ruth watched him with satisfaction. 'I'm going to take *such* good care of you!' she whispered.

## ARTHUR SYMONS AND IMPRESSIONISM

BY WILBUR MARSHALL URBAN

### I

THE cessation of Mr. Arthur Symons's writing has brought poignantly to mind the fact of a peculiarly self-contained and self-conscious æsthetic personality. As a perfected instrument for impressionism he was unique, perhaps, among writers of English. To have used that instrument is to have made ourselves debtors to his wisdom — and still more at times to his divine folly.

There are few of Symons's readers who would willingly have missed either his wisdom or unwisdom. To have read his *Cities*, especially his *Seville* and *Moscow*, is to have learned the pleasures of broken lights in the emotions, to have traversed the long road from the *genius loci* of the ancients to the *sentiments des places* of the modern French psychologist. To have read his *Plays, Acting and Music* is to have enjoyed to the last degree that versatility as well as refinement of appreciation toward which the modern spirit moves, its exacting skepticism, its sad inconsequence and glorious irresponsibility. And finally, to have read his

poems — is not that to have felt the temper of the instrument itself, the residual moods of a life of impressions, themselves inexpressible in prose; to have read his *Spiritual Adventures* — is not that to have learned also how such an instrument of impressions is formed: the heats and colds alike, the exclusions as well as the affirmations? Side-lights on the quest for beauty, they show forth the transports of the abstraction of beauty from life, but also its revenges.

No one who has read Symons at all widely will doubt the propriety of describing his *métier* as the abstraction of beauty from life. He is always conscious of himself as an instrument of sensation. The words 'abstract' and 'disengage' are constantly on his lips. Whether it be a moment of his own experience or a glimpse of nature, whether the mood of a man or of a city, in any case it is some quintessential soul of things that he will disengage, drop by drop, from the passing moments. It is in no wise different in his criticism. Apparently it is, if anything, with preference that he applies his delicate powers to that form of experience which,

as Plato said, is thrice removed from reality. In art, whether it be the unconscious collective art of a city, or the conscious sacrificial and individual art of a genius, he finds the processes of distillation at least twice performed, once by the action of life experience, and once by the reconstructions of the artist. In these sublimations of life he is at home, the instinctive sloth of his temperament — for there can be no other word — predisposing him to this parasitical relation to life. In art, to use his own words, 'reality already has an atmosphere,' and in the disengaging of the atmosphere from the thing he finds his highest joy.

Symons seeks, and can find, an adventure among these lordly if diaphanous mansions of the soul. Indeed the possibility of adventure is extraordinarily great; his facility and breadth of appreciation are marvels of cultivation, no less than of original endowment. But one is impressed with an equally extraordinary limitation. While no contemporary English critic has played the light of his temperament over a wider range of arts and experiences, none, it is curious to note, is so abstracted and monotonous in his standpoint. A hatred of the commonplace has driven him far afield, but by a curious paradox he finds, not 'native' moments, but always the predestined commonplaces of his own soul. In his search for beauty he has looked at life from every angle; strangeness has been sought rather than refused; there has been an arduous and discreet cultivation of the continual slight novelty. But as soon as he gets these strangenesses and exotics into his hands, they all take on the same color. Amid all the variety of his appreciations there is a persistent monotony of realization.

This curious monotony is perhaps the most striking note of his verse. I

know of no two volumes of poems in which the titles exhibit a wider range of subjects, or subjects more stimulating to the imagination. I also know of none where the imagination is so circumscribed by a certain unity of mood. If his *Silhouettes* are indeed but the outline and the black and white of poetry, it is not because the objects and experiences of which he writes are themselves colorless and without the vital suggestions of the rounded form. As native moments they are full of color and rich in the promise of emotion. It is rather because in passing through his soul they have undergone a process of abstraction which leaves them but the achromatic thinness of a mood. If his *London Nights* are all pitched to one key, so that to have read one is in a sense to have read them all, it is not because the phantoms that flit through those restless nights are without variety. Here also there is that arduous, if not always discreet, cultivation of the continual slight novelty. It is rather that all are predetermined to resolve themselves into one ground tone — and that, too, a tone singularly like the recurrent mood of a dream. In the *Loom of Dreams*, — so one of the poems of the collection is called, — there is, as he himself becomes finally aware, a fatal magic which, no matter how varied and many-colored the threads of life may be, always weaves the same pattern.

I have emphasized this curious effect of monotony, not because it is necessarily opposed either to beauty or to æsthetic effectiveness. In its way Symons's verse is both beautiful and effective. There is indeed something to be said for his own opinion that a certain monotony is essential to art, — for his feeling that the Russian landscape as one approaches Moscow, with its almost unbearable vastness and monotony, gives rise to a mood akin

to that produced by the greatest art. Great beauty is never afraid of singleness of heart; one of the secrets of effectiveness is reiteration. Nor have I emphasized such monotony as something undesired and wholly unsought. That Symons, in fact, desired it secretly, with a strange sympathetic submission, even though it was closely followed by the shadows of *ennui* and monomania, one easily learns from that marvelous 'impression,' *An Autumn City*: that city of Arles in which the 'soul of autumn made itself a body,' that city whose pleasing monotony he contrasts with the variety of the empty sunlight and the obvious sea of Marseilles. Here the single tone of the dripping rain, the one air of the cathedral repeated over and over again, the single unchanging odor of the place, and the repetition of primitive peasant faces — all fuse into a unity of mood singularly pleasing to the nerves.

Neither as unbeautiful, therefore, nor yet as undesired, does this monotony impress itself upon us, but rather as something inevitable and inexorable. For this fundamental sameness of realization, amid the greatest variety of appreciations, is, if I mistake not, one of the marks of impressionism, of that attitude of mind and will peculiar to the cult of the æsthetic instrument. In place of simplicity of conception there is this sameness of realization; for the unity of creative passion, there is the unity of the relaxed mood. The genus, it is true, may have many species, the fundamental mood may have a variety of emotional accompaniments and overtones. It may have all the cloying sweetness of William Morris's *Earthly Paradise*; it may be toned with the wistful speculation of Walter Pater's prose; it may have the bitter-sweet of Rossetti, or the sterile, dogged joys of Symons himself, — but in any case

there is the same reiterated undertone, the sense of a will moving about in worlds unrealized. Dreamers they all are, wandering in a dreamless day. Whether then, retaining the one generous belief that nothing that has ever interested the human mind can wholly lose its worth, they may seek to extract from the past a timeless value; or, once deceived by the too facile consolations of romance, they may snatch enjoyment from the soulless appearances of the moment; in either case it is the enjoyment of the mood after the dogma about which it has formed is gone, the sad residuum of an indeterminate idealism.

## II

Symons's collection of poems, *London Nights*, is dedicated to Paul Verlaine; his *Days and Nights* to Walter Pater. If he has learned much of his art from the former, some of whose poems he has translated, it is safe to say that he has got much of his philosophy from the latter. The former may have taught him the technical secrets of a most delicate detachment of appearance from reality; the latter has given him the theory of that detachment.

To be sure, Symons practices his master's creed with a difference, his temperament allowing him to extract from nature the essences of many things which Pater's coldness will not let him touch. Yet in both there is that same fastidiousness of taste that finds nature tasteless, and that will not allow them to take the raw emotion, 'the big, foolish, dirty thing,' just as it is. In both there is the same sedate and sombre lack of humor, a necessary consequence of their finding nature tasteless. In both, and back of all, there is the same deep-seated and instinctive hatred of the commonplace, which,



whether congenital or acquired, is the source of both the philosophy and the practice of the æsthete and the impressionist.

As it happens, one may find in Pater a statement of this very creed; a statement not only exquisite in the accuracy of its self-revelation, but also serving as the superscription for almost everything that Symons has written. 'It is easy,' so Pater tells us in his essay on Winckelmann, 'to indulge the commonplace metaphysical instinct. But a taste for metaphysics may be one of the things that we must renounce if we mean to mould our lives to æsthetic perfection. Philosophy,' he continues, 'serves culture, not by a fancied gift of absolute or transcendental knowledge, but by suggesting questions which help one to detect the passions, the strangenesses, the contrasts of life.'

In these two articles of his creed, — not only the denial of the instinct for the real behind appearance, for this and this only is the metaphysical instinct at bottom, but also the perverted use of this instinct to stimulate the passions, the strangenesses, the contrasts of life, — the 'perfect æsthete' stands revealed. With true insight the hater of the commonplace denies the metaphysical instinct in all its forms, for it is not only commonplace, but is the most common of all things. It is the feeling for the roots of reality, for the solidarity of instinct, of which the several instincts are but feeble anticipations; it is *the primal lust*. Denial, frustration of this primal lust is the philosophy of impressionism. In the matter of the elemental and common instincts of life, the perfect æsthete will, as Symons confesses in the matter of love, 'cultivate diverse imaginings, strange reticences, only that the one vulgar final act remain an unadmitted fact.' In some obscure

way it is always the vulgar final fact of realization, in short the metaphysical instinct, from which such an one shrinks.

With Pater this vulgar instinct for the real back of appearance is to be renounced. With others, as with Symons himself, there is rather a perverse and inevitable frustration of the instinct. In the first chapter of his *Spiritual Adventures*, entitled 'A Prelude to Life,' he not only confesses an early — almost congenital — hatred of the elemental and commonplace, but in his 'impressions' of his early self reveals a form of experience that amounts almost to a dissociation of appearance and reality. In that mere chain of unconnected emotions and sensations, so obscure and meaningless at first, one finally receives an impression of extraordinary lucidity and outrightness. One comes to see that of just these detached, abstracted moments, was his life composed. The singular sensitiveness to life's impressions combined with an equally singular impenetrability to life's interests, — this, one comes to see, is not a pose but a prepossession.

The tales which make up the body of the *Adventures* are studies in just such æsthetic dissociations. In Christian Trevalga the bondage to the passing sensation is one of tones. For him music becomes the only reality. Something more than the soul of humanity expressing itself in melody; it is a real thing that may be hurt. Cut off from the vulgar but full and resonant emotions of humanity, the musician comes to find unearthly feelings in the tones themselves.

All this, it is true, does not take place without a struggle. Trevalga tries to find himself, to *become real* again by falling in love, and in this experience for a time he again touches real things. But his master is imperious and, real-



ity again receding, the mastery of appearances passes over into a permanent hallucination.

In *The Death of Peter Waydelin* it is the tragedy of the lust and dominance of the eye. An initial slightly novel way of seeing things, an obscure facility for abstracting color, light, and shade from its meanings, passes finally into a permanent set of the eye in which all things are seen with a monotonous tinge of green, and into a distortion of the soul in which all things are bathed in illusion.

In these two studies of 'art for art's sake' there are indeed striking hints of the psychology of the musician and painter, but even more interesting is the philosophy of impressionism that emerges. 'There had been, it was clear to me,' the fictitious observer of Waydelin remarks, 'some obscure martyrdom going on, not the less for art's sake because it came out of the very necessity of things.'

Such a creed is apparently inevitable at some stage of the development of the artist. The affinity for impressionism and unreality is inherent in the artistic temperament. In the diary which he kept at Venice, Wagner speaks of the magical effect of the square of St. Mark's, as of 'a wholly distant out-lived world' admirably fitting his wish for solitude. 'Nothing to strike one as directly real life. Everything is objective like a work of art.' He speaks of its 'thoroughly theatrical suggestion, through its absolute uniqueness and its sea of utter strangers void of all concern for me — merely distracting one's fancy.' Half-æsthetic states of still another type are eagerly sought by the artist to prolong the isolation, 'the instant made eternity'; those of the 'Absinthe-Drinker,' who, as in the poem of Symons of that name, gently waves the visible world away, or of his 'Opium Smoker' who is engulfed and

drowned, deliciously swathed with the ceremonies of eternity. Whether as the unasked gift of the moment, or as the artificial widening and deepening of the specious present, it is such experiences, so congenial to the artistic temperament, that lead to the belief that 'the complete and perfect artist is from all eternity separated from reality.'

For many this is but a phase of experience; 'tired of eternal unreality, they reach out into that very thing that is forbidden them.' For others again, as for Symons himself, the contradiction in the artist's temperament remains permanent. Thus it is that the obscure martyrdom of the artist is a part of Symons's creed, — for him there must be no longer merely the conscious denial of the metaphysical instinct, but some fatal and inexorable frustration of the commonplace instinct for reality itself; no longer merely a sense of æsthetic perfection, but a prescience of the monotony of sterile realizations. This it is that pervades the *Spiritual Adventures*, this is the burden of his critical philosophy of beauty.

In his *Romantic Movement*, written with the avowed intention of exalting the work of Blake, Coleridge, and Shelley as the final criterion of poetry, Symons speaks of Shelley as 'an enchanter who never mistakes the images he calls up for realities,' and yet he immediately adds, with a contradiction that would be inexplicable were it not involved in his whole philosophy, 'that *Prometheus* is a cloudy procession of phantoms seen in a divine hallucination!' In his own experience, accordingly, this contradiction is never resolved. Condemned to the unreality of existences that he has transformed to mere appearances, he is yet constantly aware of a mystical reality that has escaped him in the process. He complains that he is 'too much possessed

by the apparent and unreal.' He regrets the corporeal and worldly limitations that shut him out from the mystical. In short — if you are vouchsafed the divine hallucination, you will have absolute poetry; if, on the other hand, as he confesses in his own case, this be not attained, you will have — well, impressionism! In any case — and this is the sum of the matter — the blood of the martyrs is the seed of beauty.

## III

Abstraction, disengagement of beauty from life — such is Symons's conscious goal. An obscure, though none the less real, martyrdom of sense and sentiment is its recognized condition. One would like to know just what this beauty, this æsthetic perfection is, and by what it is to be known. Such a definition is not to be found in Symons's writings; though not without his standards, he never defines them directly. One finds, it is true, certain secondary qualities that are fairly constant, — the strangeness that romanticism adds to beauty, the monotony that accompanies the greatest art. It is only between the lines that one learns to read, and finally to formulate to himself, a certain obscure ideal of pure beauty, of beauty pure and undefined, not without its tone of curious asceticism.

Pater somewhere speaks of a transparent, diaphanous type of soul that would value every single experience at its timeless worth, not caring to add to or abstract from it. What he seems to mean is that in such a soul, each experience, freed from its pragmatic reality, could will its own intention with uninhibited purity. The solidarity of sense and instinct being broken up, the demands of the thing, of our own and other wills being denied, the absoluteness of each experience would be

purchased by its unreality. In this artificial suppression of all relations would lie the veritable unreality of the life that art thus offers us, but also its supreme beauty. Some such purity of appreciation, the result of the inhibition of thought-relations, constitutes the æsthetic perfection.

Purity of impression has a well-defined meaning for the impressionist of ear and eye. Has purity of appreciation a similar intent for the virtuoso of feeling and mood? For the former, as we have seen in Symons's studies of the martyrs of these two senses, it is in just this freedom of the color or tone from its pragmatic reality, this freedom in which it wills its own intention with uninhibited purity, that beauty is to be found. The light and color of things, so the impressionist in painting would say, are to be given in art as they are intrinsically for consciousness, not as they are as instruments of knowledge — before they have begun to serve as means of knowledge, or after they have ceased thus to function. In so far as they enter into the subjective feeling of the individual, sensations are pleasant or unpleasant; in so far as they serve the purposes of knowledge, they are true or false; in so far as in and for themselves they are appreciated and brought to expression, they are æsthetically true or untrue, and therefore beautiful or ugly.

Not essentially different is the ideal of the virtuoso of the soul. Here, too, as Symons indeed tells us, the purpose of art is to show man what he is to himself alone, and his feeling as it is for itself alone. As in the case of the sensations, art is to ignore those special demands of pragmatic reality, through which they are changed and improved, so in the case of feelings and emotions, she is to remove all those moral purposes, all the limitations which spring from the complexity

of the social life, or from the rigidity of individual character, allowing the feeling to live itself out in individual purity. A violent passion, a profound melancholy, sweeps over the soul. A thousand different elements meet and interpenetrate, without precise contours, without the least tendency to become externalized, to take the commonplace mould of social habit or moral form. This is the price of their originality. Description, as ordinarily understood, means just this: to give them this form and mould; but then, instead of describing our feelings, we have really taken from them their unique color and aroma, and have substituted a juxtaposition of inert states translated into social counters. But beauty is the opposite of all this; not thus, but rather by a reversal of this process, is the disengagement of beauty from life to be attained.

Thus, an essential similarity of intention, as of realization, belongs (*pace the New Laocoon!*) alike to the impressionist of sense and of sentiment. They also share a common weakness — a disregard for the structural elements of reality. It has been said of a Manet or a Monet, that in their passion for atmosphere, the mere object becomes indifferent — ‘just enough suggestion of form to supply solar reflections and to hang saturated vapors upon, sufficed them.’ May it not also be said of a Symons, that in his passion for nuances of experience, the soul itself becomes indifferent; that he seeks just enough suggestion of character to supply the reflections of passions or to serve as a peg upon which to hang detached and vaporous emotions? If it may be said of the impressionists of color that, for the purposes of their studies, they come to cease to work except in the face of a sensation, and lose the power of deliberate construction, may it not be said of these impression-

ists of the soul that to them is finally very little more left than a power to vibrate with wonderful promptness to any transient sensation or emotion? The very delicacy and tremulous fluency of Symons’s touch is but an outward and visible sign of this inner emotionalism. The deliberate disregard of all those rigid qualities, whether prejudice or obligation, that constitute the form of the soul, results in a fluidity of values which, while not without a unique quality of beauty, represents an excessive sacrifice to the ideal of perfected appreciation.

#### IV

The poets of romance are always singing of love; the realists of novel and drama never cease to think and talk of sex. Both of these we may call morbid valuations; yet in some obscure way all the extensions of the metaphysical instinct seem to find their roots here. Doubtless it is not wholly true that, as Symons has put it into the mouth of ‘Lust’ to say, —

Love was born  
To be the world’s delight and scorn,  
That man might veil, his eyes being dim,  
My own infinity in him; —

doubtless it is not entirely true that all the refractions of the infinite, in morals, in art, in religion, are but ‘broken lights’ of love. Nevertheless it must be recognized that all the tragic possibilities of the human will may be seen reflected in this one dark pool. Certainly the morbid frustration of the metaphysical instinct, half deliberate violence, half obscure martyrdom, the whole tragedy of abstraction of beauty from life, is at its deepest point in the poem from which these lines are taken.

The possibilities of delight and scorn are for Symons varied indeed, as varied as his *London Nights*, but the ground

tones resolve themselves into two ultimate moods, both sterile, half-scornful joys of a vicious abstraction. In one mood he hails the simplicity of pure lust. He finds, in a poem such as 'Idealism,' an inexpressible delight in the knowledge that the woman has no soul, no possibilities of mind or heart, but is merely 'this masterpiece of flesh.' Again in 'Liber Amoris' he finds a rapture in the thought of love sinking from the infinite -- and just enough to last one night.

In quite another mood, however, and one almost as frequent, he seeks all the subtleties, diverse imaginings, and strange reticences of love, 'only that the one final vulgar act remain an unadmitted fact.'

In either case it is a vicious abstractionism, turning realities into appearances, a lust for realization moving about in worlds unrealized.

To this sophisticated use of the metaphysical instinct the philosophy of impressionism naturally gravitates. And the end thereof is decadence. Frustration of this instinct for the real is of necessity followed by perversion and sterilization of the emotions. For all these emotions which the artist seeks to detect, and in which he luxuriates, presuppose the absolute reality of their objects. A passion by its very nature is a claim to absoluteness, a projection into infinity. The tragic is impossible without certain fixed prepossessions or prejudices concerning the real. The sentiment of sublimity appears only where the absolute shows itself for a moment, where an elevation above or descent below the *milieu* of experience causes it to show its face.

All these emotions, to be rich and full, must presuppose the structural elements of the soul which the impressionist disregards. To feel them one must assume the rigid prepossessions,

the absolutes, on which they live and from which they draw their blood. All these must be intensely real. But it is as a spiritual parasite, clinging to life by the tentacles of make-believe, that the impressionist and illusionist live, and luxuriate in their emotions. Tragedy, strangeness, even sublimity of a kind -- all are there, but somehow they are substitutes, unreal, and without heart, frustrate ghosts of passions that are spent.

There is, in fact, in Symons's writings, especially in his poetry, a certain curious tone, -- not unrelated to the monotony of which we have spoken, -- describable only as a sort of parasitic sublimity. It flashes out here and there in his shorter poems, but it is felt most surely in the longer ones, such as 'The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins' and 'Faust and Helena.' One need not deny the thrill of these poems to recognize that it is specious; one need not deny the sublimity of vices raised to the infinite, to realize that this very sublimity is achieved only by a morbid contrast with the really structural elements of life. The sentiment is there, but it is parasitic. It lives only in the world of morbid valuations, only so long as the sentiment of the absolute is lent to images and ideas that will not bear its weight.

Nowhere does Symons show this specious, perverted sublimity more completely than when he touches religious emotion, as in 'Seward Lackland.' If his frequent enjoyment of religious images and emotions without their dogmatic core of belief is an unpleasant travesty of religion, this picture of enjoyment of the sacrifice of one's soul for the glory of God, this orgy of morbid valuations, becomes well-nigh unbearable.

One wishes that the æsthetic would leave God out of the business; that, as Laplace in his phenomenalism, so

Symons in his impressionism, should say, 'I have no need of this hypothesis.' But no! He does need it, precisely for his inverted sublimities. One almost feels that, like the *décadent* in one of Jokai's novels, he might easily use a night of debauchery as an exquisite preparation for the enjoyment of Gregorian tones.

After all, then, Symons does indulge the metaphysical instinct. Indeed he explicitly says that 'poetry and metaphysics are alike a disengaging, though for different ends, of the absolute element in things.' And if, again, with Pater and the other impressionists, he holds that music is the most metaphysical of the arts, it is because, for him at least, 'it comes to us with a divine hallucination, chills us a little with its airs from heaven and elsewhere, and breaks down for an instant the too solid walls of the world, showing us the gulf.'

It is all a question of the end. And his end is to feel and to show the gulf! He is metaphysical for the same reason that he is anything else — for the sake of the sensation. Would he not, one is constrained to ask, rather find the gulf than the solid platform of the world? Is it not just the chill of the gulf that he finds delightful, perhaps because of his very fever and restlessness?

v

In the *Prelude to Life* Symons speaks of his feverish delight in the mere *seeing* of London. 'I grasped at all these sights,' so the account runs, 'with the same futile energy as a dog that I once saw standing in an Irish stream, and snapping at the bubbles that ran continually past him on the water. Life ran past me continually and I tried to make all the bubbles my own.' Doubtless all this began with a mere delight

in appearances, the sheer joy of living, the animal fondness for sparkle and movement. But it ended in being a desperately serious, if futile occupation. It became a kind of spiritual avarice. Symons has indeed, a curious soul-affinity for the miser, whose passion he seems to understand. That which is least comprehensible to most men, the hoarding of the mere empty counters of exchange, is for him full of a real if perverted poetry. He speaks of the respect for money as for the most serious thing in the world: 'the symbol of a physical necessity,' it is true, but 'a thing having no real existence in itself, no importance to the mind that refuses to realize its existence.' Only the miser really possesses it in itself, for the miser is the idealist, the poet of gold! Symons's spiritual avarice is greedy of the poetry of the passing moment, the golden moments through which life passes on its way. Nothing that he has written has such convincing personal reality as his picture of Avarice in 'The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins,' — that Avarice which

Hoard the moments love let slip . . .  
Embracing all things that exist,  
All kisses that all lips have kissed!

Surely we have here what the philosophers call the bad Infinite, and the sterile, ugly Absolute. It is a trick a vicious abstractionism can play in life, as well as in philosophy.

One of the romanticists to whom Symons devotes a short section, a certain Darly, says of himself, 'My whole life has been an abstraction — such must be my work.' It is not strange that Symons finds 'every word' of the short letter in which this sentence occurs, 'a revelation.' It was a revelation precisely because it revealed a truth that was also personal. I am not sure but that he would have called his own life an extraction, rather

than an abstraction, if one may be suffered this play with words, — one long process of extracting the essence or quintessence of beauty from life and its moments; from men and from cities; from music and from plays; from the soul and from the flesh; never, however, taking the thing as it was, but rather in that morbid valuation in which one seeks to render moments of sensation and emotion absolute, to widen instants to eternities, and in which one finds only the bare identities of love, the sameness of *London Nights*, and finally a life that is but a dream.

Yet with it all, this avarice remains his one abiding passion. In 'Satiety' he tells us, —

I loathe the laggard moments as they pass  
(the futile energy with which he  
snapped at the passing moment has  
changed to another mood), —

Yet if all power to taste the dear deceit  
Be not outworn and perished utterly,  
Lend me some last illusion e'er I be  
A clod, perhaps, at rest within a clod.

In contrast to all this there come to

mind the words of a splendid little spendthrift of life; words which, although they may shock us with their vulgar freshness, seem almost made to throw into the face of such as Mr. Symons: —

'I don't care a rap for remembering,' she cries; 'I care for you. This moment could n't be better until the next moment comes. That's how it takes me. Why should *we* hoard? We are n't going out presently like Japanese lanterns in a gale. It's the poor dears who do, who know they will, who can't keep it up, who need to clutch at wayside flowers and put 'em in little books for remembrance. Flattened flowers are n't for the likes of us. Moments, indeed! We like each other fresh and fresh. It is n't illusion for us. We, too, just love each other — the real identical other all the time.'

Is this mere bravado — this carelessness and extravagance? Or is it the fruit of a discipline that Symons seems never to have known? Perhaps it is but that deeper metaphysical instinct which he deliberately frustrated and renounced.



# MAURICE BARRÈS AND THE YOUTH OF FRANCE

BY RANDOLPH S. BOURNE

## I

PERHAPS the most significant experience that comes to one who lives for a time in France is the vivid personal realization that above all the concrete manifestations of industry and religion, politics and letters, there is France, and that her thought and action, politics and poetry, national endeavor and daily life, are woven together into an intimate cultural fabric of a richness and tenacity of which we have little knowledge at home in our heterogeneous America.

In this wondrous city of Paris, where art is the occasion for continual intellectual warfare, and ideas cause *débâcles*, one cannot read the journals or see the play, or even walk the streets, yellow with their flood of books, without seeming to touch everywhere the soul of France. Everything has its style, everything has its spirit characteristically French, and the nation, as a whole, is proudly conscious of it. And, more significant still to the American who watches his language go to pieces under the strain put upon it by the exigencies of the pulsating American life, there is a language here which conserves all these attitudes and nuances of feeling, and may still, unlike our modern English, express both simplicity and ardor with perfect freedom from banality.

But, best of all, one finds in France a true *jeunesse*, a younger generation, into whose hands the precious fabric of the national culture is given for conser-

vation and use. In France, unlike our Anglo-Saxondom, youth, like woman and democracy, seems to be taken seriously; it is the thinking youth who measure for the nation the direction and force of the spiritual currents of the day, and stamp upon the age its characteristic impress. And the older generation, having played its rôle of youth, is not averse to devoting itself to discovering what the new *jeunes gens* are thinking and dreaming. By means of *enquêtes*, or a sort of social introspection, the literary journals keep the public informed as to the intellectual tendencies of youth, even, in these latter days, of the feminine youth as well, and thus seek to make on every side youth articulate. The French education seems to set for its goal, above all things, the achievement of clarity of thought and expression. And the first result seems to be that in French youth introspection is robbed of the morbid terrors which so affright the Anglo-Saxon, destitute as he is of the faculty of expression and thus forced to watch his own thoughts. Because of our less developed social sense, our introspections are forcibly kept individual, while to the Frenchman it is always not what I find in my soul, but what we find in our soul that matters. No writing is so personal as the French; even the philosopher and sociologist will often take the reader along the personal progress of his thought, colored as it may be with emotional reactions. Where the English writer would prefer the oracularly impersonal truth, the Frenchman

is not ashamed to exhibit his 'caring' for the truth and effectiveness of his idea.

This faculty of social introspection and self-consciousness of the French genius has luminous results for those minds, both at home and abroad, who would feel the French soul of the moment. For it means that the influential writers of the age, having worked through their own adjustment of youth, their conflict with the issues of the day, leave behind them the record of their progress for the eager youth of the generation pressing on their heels. They portray with incomparable art their emotions and ideas, their weakness as well as their strength, not in egoism, but that these other minds may find themselves in them. And then in turn the writers reflect that reflection in the rising literary youth, thus sensitively reacting to the change of spiritual current, and keeping their own thought ever progressively fresh and young.

## II

Such has been the course of the thought of Maurice Barrès, acknowledged in all circles as the most influential writer of the day in France. In the progress of his romances, which are half essays, and his essays which are half romances, is reflected the trend of the French spirit of the last twenty-five years. The nationalism which is the theme of his delicate works has become, after many twistings and turnings, the gospel of the modern French youth. And his books present the most perfect picture we have of that evolution.

The youth of Barrès himself was spent in the years of disenchantment which followed the great war, the war that was a spiritual as well as a physical defeat. The almost mystical confidence in the power of the French

genius to triumph over brute force had disappeared before the mailed fist of the Prussian. Even the Utopian flame, the revolutionary enthusiasm which might have rejuvenated the spirit of the people, was utterly stamped out in the ferocity of the suppression of the Commune. The apathy and torpor of the younger generation in this atmosphere of defeat are faithfully pictured in *Les Déracinés*, based on Barrès's own days at the Lycée. Here he found an education, built upon the philosophy of Kant and his German followers, as if France were making a pathetic attempt, in the same way in which the Orientals are acting to-day with regard to the Western world, to absorb the ideas which had made the strength of her victor. But in these ideas, 'les plus hautes et les plus désolées,' the youth of Barrès's day found no fortification of soul. The atmosphere of detached rationalism, the divorce of pure reason and pure sensibility, so uncongenial to the personal and artistic French spirit, could only tear up the youth from their French soil, without transplanting them into the rich German ground. Such philosophy could only make those who absorbed it candidates for nihilism. Abjuring this, the thought of Barrès set itself, almost unconsciously, the task of re-acclimatizing the French spirit, of restoring its faith in itself.

But the difficulty of this task was aggravated by the scientific skepticism which was raging at the time. Taine had been hammering home, in a detached Anglo-Saxon way, the truths of scientific determinism, while Renan had been questioning, with destructive irony, the spiritual values upon which the established order had founded its codes and impressed them upon the soul of youth. These two masters with their disciples held the field between them, and what idealism did show itself among the literary youth, deso-

lated by national defeat and materialistic skepticism, found a forced refuge in an unreal world of symbolistic poetry, an artificial and dilettante world of sensuality which was as foreign to the French spirit of clarity and grace as was the philosophy of Kant.

But Barrès's own thought took a different road. Instead of turning to a world of mystical sensation, like Verlaine, Baudelaire, and Mallarmé, he turns, like Descartes before him, to find what he has in his own soul that has escaped the wreck of things. In dilettante fashion indeed, and in somewhat insincere imitation of the introspective methods of the old Church fathers, he submits his reactions to minute analysis, and works out a quaint sort of sensuous stoicism, a wistful, half-mocking cult of the individual, the 'moi,' the power of being 'un homme libre,' a free man.

But such individualism in a soul which was searching for the French genius, always incorrigibly social, could only be unstable and ephemeral, and it is because Barrès's thought felt the wider appeal of the nation's soul that he is the most eagerly read French writer to-day, while the symbolist contemporaries of his youth have passed like their own fleeting sensations. Already in *Le Culte du Moi*, with its pictures of his native Lorraine countryside into which he withdraws with his friend to meditate, one feels the suggestion of the larger collective life to which he must soon be sensitive. In a phrase which only a French mind, perhaps, can understand, he says, 'Be skeptical — and ardent!' That cause which is to excite his ardor is to be the life of Lorraine with its quiet beauty, its recovered peace, its procession of passing generations; and through Lorraine, the national collectivity of France. With that precise and beautiful social intuition of the French genius, this 'moi'

of Barrès, unsatisfied with itself, reaches out and finds itself not an individual in a fortuitous collection, but a link in a great chain, a focus of innumerable rays of culture, tradition, and race. He recognizes that he 'represents a moment in the development of a race, an instant in a long culture, a gesture among a thousand gestures, of a force which preceded him and will survive him.' And with Lorraine as the text, a theme which at once calls to his own mind a rich treasury of tradition and stirs in the mind of the French reader the feelings of assertion and revenge, Barrès proceeds, after the insufficiency of the 'cult of himself' has been established in *Le Jardin de Bérénice*, and *Sur l'Œil des Barbares*, to a reconstruction of French nationalism. In *Au Service de l'Allemagne*, *Les Amitiés Françaises*, *La Colline Inspirée*, the virtues of his Lorraine — the pathos of its immemorial labor, the fidelity of its soldiers and priests, the design and balance of its city, Nancy, the sober order of its old society — all give a text for the exposition under a thousand forms of the French genius in its purity and vigor.

### III

In his later articles and speeches, this exposition develops into a genuine philosophy of nationalism, — a nationalism which shall mean the defense and conservation of French art and ideas and manners as well as her military reorganization and defense; a patriotism which shall define a Frenchman as 'one who has come to a consciousness of his own formation,' 'who has put himself at the single point of view of the French life,' and feels within himself all the thousand strands of the past and present which make him what he is. He preaches a return of art to the old principles of clarity, balance, and design, the art of 'la continuité

française,' and a new catholicism, recognizing the social meaning of the 'communion of saints,' — the ideal collective life where the hunger of the 'moi individuel' is satisfied by the 'moi social.' And finally, a cult of France, symbolized in 'la terre et les morts,' — the land and its dead, — with its worshipers bound together in interwoven links of *amitiés*, a consciousness of a common background of living truth.

This is the nationalism which has called the youth of the rising generation back to a defense of 'l'esprit français,' and surely traditionalism has never been preached in such seductive terms! A traditionalism from which all the blind, compressing forces of the social groups have been withdrawn, so that one feels only the nourishing influences of a rich common culture in which our individual souls are steeped, and which each generation carries on freely, consciously, gladly, because of its immortal power to express the traits of the race's genius, — this is a gospel to which one could give one's self with wisdom and love!

And to such an appeal, touching with a subtle and delicate style all the chords of the French soul, Barrès would have found the youth of France responding *en masse* during those early years of the nineties when his doctrines of nationalism were first taking shape, if the astounding drama of French thought had not provided an intermediate scene, which, bursting like a bombshell upon the nation in the Dreyfus affair, showed in its ugliest forms the actual obscurantism of these national institutions of church and army and race which Barrès was beginning to present in his lovely colors of idealization. The *affaire*, which seemed to the outside world simply a matter of the triumph of individual justice, was for France a colossal combat of ideas, and as a result

the national storehouses of tradition were revealed as lodging-places for the basest of prejudices and blind injustices, rather than for the rich common culture of France. While the reconstruction of the national genius had been going on in minds like that of Barrès, an international socialism had been growing up by its side. The exiled Communards had been filtering back; industrial development had made the working-classes restless; Paris was reasserting her position as the cosmopolitan capital of Europe; and the blind fury with which the military and ecclesiastical circles pursued the unfortunate Jew threw all these new elements of internationalism and humanitarianism into one solid block.

The victory of the humanitarian party was so overwhelming that Church and Army were almost as effectually erased from the spirit of France as had been the revolutionary socialism after the sanguinary reprisals of the Commune. And in the *débâcle* of traditional institutions, this new spirit of nationalism, which Barrès had been so carefully constructing, went down. France entered upon a decade of secular democracy, a golden age of internationalist and socialist feeling. The middle-class political parties leaned toward socialist action, the syndicalist organization of the workers made rapid progress, the peace movement became popular, the Church was denationalized, the age of *l'Humanité* seemed to have come. The new nationalism had developed at a bound into internationalism.

The great prophets who emerged from the devastating conflict were Anatole France and Emile Zola. France, with his metaphysical skepticism and humanitarian socialism, seemed to combine that disillusionment and ardor which Barrès had preached in his 'cult of himself.' Zola, on the other hand,

satisfied the hunger for realism which represented the reaction against the dreamy symbolism of the poets who went down too in the wreck of traditionalism, while in his dogged battle for justice he struck a new and profounder sincerity into the hearts of the French youth. Together, these two writers seem to have held the field between them for more than a decade, expressing the wider aspirations of the time, and yet, in the case at least of Anatole France, not losing the delicate touch of irony and grace which is perhaps the finest and most subtle quality of the French genius.

## IV

To the visitor to-day in France who asks what the younger generation is thinking and dreaming, it seems that that golden age has passed. The reaction has occurred, the nationalism of Barrès, checked by the *affaire*, has at last asserted itself, and the youth of France find their spirit called home to defend the national spirit against the enemies within and without. For suddenly the golden age was struck by the electrifying menaces of Germany at Agadir, and in a flash the whole situation seemed to be revealed. 'While you have been indulging,' reaction said, 'in these dreams of social Utopias at home and perpetual peace abroad, you have left the nation undefended, you have weakened her so that her hereditary enemy does not fear to flout her in the face of Europe.'

The old feelings began to be renewed, the burden of Lorraine began again to reverberate through the French soul. On top of Agadir came the great railway strike with its threat of syndicalist revolution. To the frightened bourgeoisie, alarmed at the power they had been giving to the workers, the golden age suddenly revealed itself

as the criminal idleness of fantastic reverie. To-day, after four years, one finds the reaction in full swing. Military service, which had seemed a bitter and barely tolerable evil, is actually increased by one-half, and is hailed as the sacrifice which the youth of France must be prepared to make for the nation. The pacifist internationalism now assumes the guise of a chimerical dream, and the old national antagonisms loom again. The Church, whose fall was viewed almost with indifference, now begins to seem lovely in her desolation; her political and social power shattered, the thoughtful youth begin to respond to her æsthetic appeal. Even royalism, under the leadership of some of the most able intellects of the day, begins to raise its head, and to preach a cult of the crown as the symbol of the social order and spiritual cohesion, without which a true nationalism is impossible.

In the numerous symposiums of the journals, the 'social introspections' of the day, one sees the trend of these tendencies and the influence of Barrès, whose position, one is told, is almost without a parallel since Chateaubriand. Physically and spiritually the youth of France seem to be setting themselves to the defense of 'l'esprit Français.' The hard and decivilizing life of the *caserne* is accepted for its long three years as a necessary sacrifice against the threats of the foe to the east. Politically, a restlessness seems to be evident, a discontent with the feebleness and colorlessness of the republican state, and a curious drawing together of the extreme Left and the extreme Right, in an equal hatred, though from opposite horizons, of the smug capitalism of the day, — a *rapprochement* for the founding of the Great State, which shall bind the nation together in a sort of imperial democracy, ministering to the needs of all the people and raising



them to its ideals of splendor, honor, and national defense.

Spiritually one finds a renaissance of religious faith, — mystical and social, however, rather than dogmatic; for a new prophet, Bergson, has arisen to justify the intuitionist approach to the reality of the life-force, unmediated by the cold concepts of science. Yet, while he shelters mystical appreciation, he seems to glorify the life of action, at whose service he puts the intelligence. So that the youth of the day, following him, are both more mystical than the realistic followers of Zola and the rationalistic followers of Anatole France, and at the same time more resolute and active, more eager for the combat with life, than were the humanitarians of the preceding decade. This taste for action finds expression in the new popularity of sports, and the expressed admiration which one finds for the individualism of the Anglo-Saxon. All these tendencies seem to mark the reappearance of a fusion of thought and action, of intelligence and feeling, which is the characteristic charm of the French genius. In the midst of what seems like reaction, this new spirit is searching for a national self-consciousness which shall clearly see, strongly feel, and sanely act. In the search for the *nationalisme intégrale* of Barrès, the youth of to-day, one feels, are seeking the nourishing qualities of the traditional trait, the richness of a common culture which, has a right to make traditionalism seem seductive and beautiful.

For this new cult of nationalism is a very different thing from what it would have been if it had succeeded when first preached by Barrès, unpurified by the humanitarian socialism of the golden age. The new national consciousness is not a mere chauvinism, but sounds deeper notes of genuine social reform at home. Social work, of the sort that is testifying to a generally awakened social consciousness in America, is attracting great numbers of the youth of both sexes in France to-day. The sociological philosophy has made great advances in the last decade in France, and is influencing an important younger school of writers, who call themselves *unanimités*. Much of the more youthful writing of the day bears witness to the enthusiastic discovery of William James, and of our divine poet of democracy, Walt Whitman.

So, if the French youth of the present day, inspired by the traditionalist Barrès, are coming to know their own national genius anew, they are coming to a knowledge of it immensely enriched and fertilized by the liberation of those years of socialism and a broadly ranging humanism. A traditionalism, rich and appealing like that of Barrès, but colored by this new social and pragmatic feeling, seems the best of guaranties that the younger generation in France, no matter what the dread exigencies of national circumstance, will not go very permanently or very far along the path of obscurantism and reaction.



# THE LAWYER'S CONSCIENCE AND PUBLIC SERVICE

BY CHARLES A. BOSTON

## I

A WRITER in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1913, contrasted the professional standards of the lawyer and the physician, to the obvious discredit of the former. He expressed surprise that within two professions touching life upon matters of equal importance, — professions of ancient dignity and learning, and inviting to their service men of equal and rare ability, — there should in the same community be so different a spirit.

The inside daily workings of a profession are scarcely of sufficient interest to attract the attention of a magazine reader, or to merit their description in a magazine article, but when the profession is arraigned and attacked, then, after the manner of its system, it may justly be heard to reply. A reply, however, calls for a formulation of the charges, and, still following the fashion of the lawyer, in an endeavor to get at the substance of the charges, I find they can be summarized as inertia, technicality, faulty criminal procedure, neglect of duty to society, and unjust methods in advocacy.

But before I leave my text to launch out into an endeavor to state what a lawyer really is, and what his ideals not only should be, but are, let me point out that a contrast between physicians and lawyers is not either a sure or a safe way to detect or to correct a lawyer's faults. If we analyze the praise which in the article in question is meted out, to a physician, and contrast it

with the depreciation of the lawyer, we shall find that in essence the physician is commended for aiding his patient to escape the penalties imposed by nature, while the lawyer is condemned for aiding his client to escape the penalties imposed by man; nature's penalties are exact, and repentance and subsequent good works can do little to mitigate them, and the physician can counteract them only by aiding his patient to avoid them through others of nature's laws. Man's laws and penalties alike are uncertain, but the lawyer is condemned for aiding his client to escape their rigor by appeals to others of these laws, usually characterized by critics as technicalities.

Physicians utilize their knowledge of the habits of the human body to restore a disordered organism to efficient activity; anything which will do this is available for their use, and all they need to do to push forward their profession is to enlarge the sphere of their knowledge.

But lawyers can push forward their profession only by a more stupendous task, not of discovery, but of influence; having conceived the existing fault, they must first devise a means of correcting it, which will not in practice do more harm than good, and then they must induce the law-making power to accept it.

Lawyers have a much more difficult task as reformers than physicians. A single physician practices upon a single individual, and the success of his effort is the restoration of his patient. If we

should apply to the physician the duty measured by his larger obligation to society, conceived in the same spirit as the lawyer's larger duty of which we have read, we might easily proclaim that it is the physician's duty to kill his patient under certain circumstances in the interest of mankind. But we readily see the fallacy of this argument, because we can recognize that the physician's real duty to society is quite consistent with his duty to his patient, for his duty to each is the same. So it may also be with the lawyer in his relation to his client; it is not now, and never was, his social duty to abandon or betray his client; and the lawyer's duty to society, such as it is, is in nowise inconsistent with his being hired for his client's needs. Indeed, historically considered, it was the client's need, and nothing else, which gave rise to the brood of lawyers, and assigned them a recognized place in our judicial system.

If all men would settle their disputes amicably there would be little need of civil courts or judges; and if all men obeyed the laws, no need of criminal tribunals, and little need of lawyers. But before lawyers were, as an actual historical creation, men invaded rights and disobeyed laws; and before lawyers, and above them, were and are laws. And lawyers did not make the laws, but they must obey and observe them, and they must proceed as the laws require.

Laws may be divided into two great classes—those which concern rights, characterized as substantive laws; and those which concern the method of securing those rights, classed as remedial laws; and among remedial laws fall those which regulate the manner of procedure in the courts, and which, more frequently than substantive laws, give rise to what are commonly styled the technicalities of law.

*VOL. 114 - NO. 3*

It is possible, but not necessarily true, that lawyers could reform the laws of procedure. It is too true that many of them are satisfied with the existing defects of procedure, and merit the description inert, but this is certainly not true of the whole profession. The truth is, the profession alone cannot reform procedure, because it is crystallized in our law, and legislators or people, as the case may be, will not submit to change. For instance, taking pattern by, but improving upon, the English practice of a single court with separate branches appropriate for different sorts of work, and with rules of court, easy of change, to regulate and do away with most of the absurd technicalities of practice, a vigorous effort, inaugurated by lawyers, was made a few years ago in New Jersey to institute a model single court with necessary divisions, and with model and simple rules; but when the necessary changes in the state constitution to effect these results were submitted to the people, the people rejected them, largely because, as I understand, they wanted no changes suggested by lawyers. It is but fair to say, however, that I am also informed that there was no unanimity among the lawyers themselves. Since then the Legislature of New Jersey, acting on the initiative of lawyers, has utilized its power to make a simple and model body of rules which are designed primarily to eliminate much of the truly despicable technicality of practice. But this required legislative action, without which the lawyers were quite powerless to reform the practice.

For the United States courts sitting in equity, Congress enacted in 1842 that the Supreme Court should make the rules of practice; and the result is that there never were more than 94

rules, and these have recently been reduced to 81. Congress has never, however, permitted the Court to make rules for practice at law, but has enacted that the practice at law in the Federal courts shall follow the state practice in the several states, thus giving rise to 48 different systems or sets of rules or practice at law, and of these the New York Code of Civil Procedure alone now contains about 2800 sections. And it has contained 3441 sections. Now a committee of the American Bar Association, composed exclusively of lawyers, is urging Congress to do with the practice at law in the Federal courts what it has been content to do with the practice in equity for a century and a quarter, and let the courts make the rules of practice.

When the Supreme Court recently remodeled and simplified its rules in equity it was to committees of lawyers in each of the nine Federal circuits that it submitted the formulation of suggestions for simplification and improvement; and in New York, by the grace of the Legislature of 1913, a committee of five lawyers is now considering a plan to simplify into a concise system its monstrous Code of Civil Procedure. The lawyers, in fact, instead of being inert, are so far as I know the only persons who are really moving to introduce practical reforms of procedure.

Before we can properly compare physicians and lawyers, to the discredit of the latter, we must first imagine physicians under a state system of medicine, in which not only broad theories of general practice, but also specific remedies and regulated doses are prescribed by a law-making power beyond the control of the physician, and under which the patient is himself clamoring for the administration of the theory, the remedy, and the dose prescribed by law, and the physician is

liable for malpractice if he makes any novel departure and fails.

If the lawyer should disregard all absurdity, anachronism, and formalism, and follow his highest concepts of ideal justice, he would be liable to encounter the technical attacks of an adversary, which, according to existing law, the judge under his official oath, must recognize. And, if judge, advocate, and adversary should all accept the same ideals, their disposition of the cause might be at variance with actual law.

The simple truth is that all men are not agreed; that no technicality, no anachronism, and no absurdity has its place in the law which did not in its origin appeal to some man as reasonable, or was not introduced into the law to promote some one's idea of justice. It is not lawyers who are at fault, but the law; and until lawyers are given the law-making power they should not be blamed for the faults of the laws.

### III

The worst charge that can be laid at the lawyer's door, in respect to defective laws, whether procedural or substantive, is that, in the interest of his client, he takes advantage of the law as it is, or as he claims it is, instead of as it ought to be in the opinion of his critic.

It is always a serious question how far a lawyer may sacrifice the legal rights of his client to his own sense of right and justice; but as a possible result, I suggest that a lawyer who sacrifices his client's actual rights to his own ideal sense of propriety, which is at variance with the legal measure of those rights, may be liable in damages for the departure. With us in the United States it is not generally believed that a lawyer is bound to accept a client or a cause (as I understand an English

barrister, generally speaking, is), and to that extent he may refrain from prosecuting or defending a cause which he deems unjust; nor is he bound to advance any illegal proposition, nor to maintain any position which he deems to be untenable; but it is, probably, his legal duty to his client, having accepted his cause or defense, to insist upon every right, whether procedural or substantive, the waiver of which would be disadvantageous to his client.

In short a lawyer is not the free agent that his critic would have us believe; he, as much as any one else, is the victim of a system which he did not originate, and for which he is not solely responsible. And as a matter of fact, through such agencies as the American Bar Association, the lawyers, as a profession, are doing a great deal toward a reform of law, of procedure, and of legal ethics. But as a profession they have no authoritative means of expression. The American Bar Association is a purely voluntary association; so are most, if not all, of the various state and county bar associations, and while they may resolve and may advise, and may formulate canons of legal ethics, and recommend simplification of practice, and the abolition of legal absurdities, they are really powerless until they get legislators and governors and people to rectify what they point out; and this process needs time.

With a proper reform of procedure it is to be hoped that there will come, in a large measure, the disappearance of what is generally deemed absurd technicality. And lawyers, who are not in fact inert, are moving vigorously to that end. No lawyer is familiar with the practice in all of the states, and none can speak for all of the states; but as in England many of the absurdities of practice were abolished in 1873 upon the giving to the High Court of Judicature of the power to make and

enforce its own rules, so, I understand, they have largely disappeared in Connecticut with the introduction of the simplified practice of 1879; and it is to be hoped that the same experience will follow from the model rules adopted in New Jersey in 1912, and by the Supreme Court of the United States for equity practice in 1913. And it does not seem too much to hope that a similar expectation may be founded on the efforts now making through the American Bar Association to induce Congress to allow the Supreme Court to formulate uniform rules of practice at law for the Federal courts, and on the forthcoming report to the New York Legislature of 1915 of the commission for the simplification of the New York practice.

#### IV

Criminal procedure is in another category. Lawyers as a class do not practice in the criminal courts except in the rural communities, and the criticism of criminal procedure does not arise from rural trials. It is from celebrated cases in urban communities, which receive widespread public attention, and wide newspaper notoriety, that we learn to suspect criminal procedure of its faults. But if we pause to analyze these fancied miscarriages of justice, we shall find that the blame attaching to lawyers or judges is really slight. I have yet to learn that any of our jails are empty. And when we learn of the escape from conviction of some celebrated wrongdoer, who is popularly supposed to be worthy of punishment, it is not the lawyer, but the jury, which has acquitted, after the prosecuting officer has had an opportunity to present his case, and the judge to expound the law impartially. And when, after conviction, the accused escapes on appeal, or secures a

new trial, it is usually because the judges are administering and applying a law which they did not make, but which the obligations of an oath compel them to enforce impartially.

One of the most widely exploited cases of this character was that in Missouri in which a conviction was reversed because of the absence of 'the' from an indictment; an absurdity, perhaps, in itself, but a mandatory requirement of the Constitution which the judges had no part in passing, and which they were sworn to support. And when in some celebrated case, and after a long trial, the jury convicts and the court on appeal confirms, then the most vigorous efforts are made, frequently by the critics of the courts themselves, to reverse their action by appeal to the pardoning power.

The defects of criminal procedure, such as they may be, are, like the defects of civil procedure, the faults of laws and lawmakers, and not of judges or lawyers. A lawyer may avail himself of them for the advantage of his client because of his conception of his duty to his client, but the defects which allow him to do this are not of his making. Here again, however, the question of ethical duty arises, whether he may or should avail himself, in behalf of his client, of some provision of law which somebody else, or even he himself, disapproves as tending to defeat the ends of justice.

This question affords me the opportunity to consider what the lawyer is, and by what rules he should be governed in seeking to utilize the law of the land in the interest of his client.

Was the office of lawyer instituted for the protection of society, as opposed to the individual? Is it an office, as alleged, which society maintains for its own benefit, as distinguished from the individual need of the man who hires the lawyer? In truth and as

a matter of fact, no! Whatever may have been the origin, need, or history of lawyers in other systems of jurisprudence, in ours the office is derived with the courts directly from England. And in England, whatever may have been the limits which its incumbents must not transgress in fulfillment of their duties to society, the origin and concept of the office related distinctly to the needs of the individual. It was to meet individual needs, and not the needs of society (save as society is composed of individuals), that the office was inaugurated. Any one can be a student of laws, and proficient in his knowledge of them, but only one who is duly admitted to practice by complying with legal regulations can become or be a lawyer, in the official and the popular sense. And there was a time, in England, when in the official sense lawyers did not exist; they have a distinct, traceable origin, in which we can find the first germs of their official duty.

Fundamentally and historically a lawyer's first duty is to his client, though he may not lawfully transgress certain other duties in his misconceived fidelity to his employer; and the man who maintains that lawyers are instituted and maintained by society for its own benefit, rather than for the benefit of the clients who hire them, is merely applying to an existing institution his own theories of what it ought to be, rather than stating what in its origin it was.

In the United States a lawyer now exercises the threefold function of adviser, representative, and advocate. The office of attorney, in the English courts, is said to have originated in a royal ordinance of King Edward I, in 1295; and the reason for its creation is said to have been the hardship to the individual defendant of going personally from distant parts of the king-



dom to attend the King's Court. These attorneys appear to have been at the outset agents merely, standing in the place of their principals; and so fully was the agency idea recognized that it is said that at one time an infant or an outlaw might be an attorney. Starting from this basis, as an office, the function of the lawyer developed until now he must be of good moral character and learned in the law, and must be examined for competency, duly admitted to the bar, and sworn to support the national and state constitutions, and to administer his office to the best of his ability.

It is historical error, therefore, to liken a lawyer to a priest, or to treat a lawyer as if he were a development from the priesthood, or his craft a priestcraft, or his concept of law revealed truth. Even among those lawyers who are criticized as being backward, inert, or otherwise reprehensible (although personally honest), the real basis of criticism, as I perceive it, is a too great fidelity to the interests of a client, and a willingness to utilize the law as it is, or as they think, or claim, it is, to the advantage of a client, who employs them, when, if they were merely indifferent, and were speculating philosophically upon the true interests of society, or were themselves making law, they would act otherwise. But this relates wholly to the lawyer as advocate; and it eliminates that vast body of cases never coming to light, but infinitely greater in number, in which the lawyer is adviser.

Although the lawyer as advocate looms large in the public mind through the usually sensational account of his activities which comes to public attention through the press, and in urban communities where these activities are most frequently made known, they are relatively insignificant when numerically considered. For instance, in my

own judicial district, comprising the Borough of Manhattan, in the city of New York, there are about 12,000 lawyers, while there are awaiting trial in the Supreme Court usually about 13,000 cases, an average of only two pending cases to each lawyer, allowing for two lawyers in each case; but of these only 2416 cases are disposed of by trial in one year; so that the business of advocacy can bring the average lawyer in my community into court for a formal trial only in one case in about three years. Yet, there is doubtless more litigation in the aggregate in New York County than anywhere else in the United States, though perhaps not so much per lawyer. It will be seen therefore, if this county be taken as a type, that, relatively considered, advocacy is necessarily a small part of the average lawyer's occupation. In fact, of course, some lawyers devote their attention much more largely to advocacy and are in the courts frequently, while others are never seen there; but I am speaking of the average.

# V

Lawyers as a body are not without a code of honor, and though the laws have not defined this code, lawyers have to some extent done so, by their traditions and voluntary acts. One finds the same general outlines of ethical propriety in a lawyer's conduct expressed in the regulations of Rome, the Code of Christian V of Denmark, promulgated in 1683, the practices of the French Bar, the traditions of the English Bar, the oaths in the German States, the oath of office in the Swiss Canton of Geneva, the statutory oath of the State of Washington, the code provisions of several western states, and the recently formulated canons of ethics of the American Bar Association, adopted in 1908. While these dif-



fer in detail, in underlying substance and dominant principle they are always much the same, and they all alike advocate and enjoin a high ideal of conduct whose controlling motive is altruistic. And yet throughout the entire period opportunity has been neither wanting nor neglected for writers to point the finger of scorn at the practices of lawyers. I am convinced that so far as this has any basis in the traditions of the profession itself, it arises from superficiality and misunderstanding on the part of the critic.

This is leaving out of consideration those black sheep within the profession, who disgrace it by their abuses. Whatever may be said of them they are relatively few in number, and thrive, so far as they do thrive, merely because of the failure of those interested, or charged with the duty, to utilize the remedies against them which the law itself, as well as the traditions of the profession, afford. I am not discussing those who abuse their office by violating its recognized obligations, but only the profession itself and its traditional standards. These are actually high, despite what in ignorance may be said to the contrary, but they do not embrace what some modern and enthusiastic progressives think they do or should embrace. For instance, while lawyers as individuals have ever actually been foremost in public service, and notably so in our own country, and while they are especially well equipped for it through their knowledge of history and laws, there is no tradition of the profession that they are public servants in the sense that they owe any duty to the public to bring about change. Every substantial change for the better seems in fact to owe its permanent formulation to the activity of some legally trained mind, but I am not aware that it is recognized by any tradition of the profes-

sion that a lawyer as such owes any duty to society as a constructive reformer.

The most perplexing ethical questions arise out of his position as advocate or attorney; in his position as adviser and counselor he may be free to counsel or dissuade, according to the very highest or even the most quixotic ideals; but when he has accepted responsibility as an attorney representing his client's rights, or as an advocate to plead his client's cause, then he is, or may be, pressed between the upper and nether millstones of inclination and duty.

For instance, it may be of great importance to the community that the truth should be known respecting a disputed fact, and it may be that a client may have confided the truth to his lawyer; but, whatever a lawyer may be personally inclined to do in respect to the disclosure of this truth, and whatever he may advise or whatever course he may adopt by way of inaction or refusal to proceed after learning the truth, he cannot by any legal process be compelled, nor will he be permitted, if he desires, to disclose it in evidence without his client's consent. If it were his own secret, he could loudly proclaim it, but as it is his client's secret, the law will not permit him to disclose it unless his client first waives the personal privilege accorded to him.

Now, this is the law, and not the mere arbitrary tradition of the profession. And like all law, it has its foundation in reason.

And so sound has this reason seemed to be that there is a progressive legislative wave operative in the United States, which in many states has now extended the rule to priests and physicians, and in some to trained nurses, while the height of absurdity in the application of the principle appears to have been reached when it was urged

(but happily without success) in Iowa that the same secrecy should be observed and enforced in respect to the knowledge obtained by a veterinary surgeon in the treatment of a horse.

But, adverting to the principle itself, which imposes this silence on a lawyer, it has its foundation in the belief that the proper administration of justice requires that there should be the most complete freedom of exchange of confidences between lawyer and client, in order that the client may be induced to speak the truth and not to deceive his own lawyer; and it is assumed that with a knowledge of the truth the lawyer will be constrained to act properly, and justice will be more adequately served, than if through fear of enforced disclosure the client should deceive his own lawyer and set him on the wrong track.

But the honorable traditions of the profession will not permit the lawyer, as an ethical possibility, to use his knowledge of the facts actively to mislead.

One of the ethical problems which is endlessly discussed, but upon which lawyers appear almost without exception to be agreed, is the duty of the lawyer in defending one accused of crime, whom he knows, or has substantial reason to believe, to be guilty. In this one case lawyers as a class appear to be arrayed against a prevalent but superficial contrary sentiment in the community; they acknowledge and assert that such a defense may be properly undertaken. But even here, the proper ethical limits of such a defense are well understood.

A lawyer may not properly seek to divert suspicion from his own client, by pointing out another innocent individual as the offender, or by presenting false evidence in support of another theory; in each instance his only justifiable course is one of silence in respect to the actual facts, and of re-

quiring the opposition to proceed to procure a verdict in strict accordance with law, and after sustaining the burden of proof which the law imposes upon the prosecution. In short, to act strictly upon the defensive. Yet it still may be asked why lawyers justify this course, when the interests of the community require conviction. Once again there is a reason, which appeals to lawyers as sound. In this view the peace and well-being of society, which is composed of individual units, depend upon the strict administration of criminal law. Its loose administration has, in time past, filled the world with unspeakable woe. The guaranty of due process of law, the writ of habeas corpus, the requirement of indictment by a grand jury, the privilege of counsel in criminal causes, and the right of trial by jury, are all remedies which bitter experience in the past with the loose or wicked administration of law, and particularly of criminal law, has demanded. The theory of the lawyer is really the theory of a constructive statesman, that the peace and well-being of society, as demonstrated by centuries of experience, make it desirable that criminal justice should be slow and careful, in order to prevent the sacrifice of innocent and law-abiding men. For, if the guilty cannot under the operation of the system be distinguished from the innocent, save by confession of his guilt, then, in order to relax the difficulties of conviction, requirements which are the actual safeguards of the innocent, and in reality of every man in the community who is liable to be suspected, are apt to be obliterated or weakened. Every precaution against wrongful conviction of an innocent man, which experience has demonstrated to be desirable to that end, is equally available as the right of a man who asserts himself to be innocent.

It must be remembered that the criminal law is only a crude device at best. It is man-made and not divine; it is not accurate; it does not measure moral guilt; only to a limited extent does it allow for provocation or temptation; it rarely allows for ignorance, and never for training, education, or environment; it is not necessarily tempered by mercy; mercy where allowed is usually optional with the individual judge; it makes no allowance for repentance; it is frequently cruel to the convict, not necessarily fitting the punishment to the crime or to the criminal; and it is always cruel to his dependents if he has previously met his obligations to them. And so considered, real justice may frequently be as well achieved by the sobering effect of a trial and acquittal, as by a conviction and punishment. It by no means follows that a man who has once committed murder may not become and be thenceforth a desirable citizen, if acquitted of his crime. Our present system succeeds to one much older which mercifully recognized a right of sanctuary and asylum for the guilty. We have abolished that right, except in the case of purely political offenders who have escaped to foreign lands. And the mere right to be defended by counsel and to be convicted by the due process of the law of the land, without personally or by counsel actively contributing to the result, is a meagre substitute, of which society itself, and its professed friends and spokesmen, have no right to complain until they reconstruct the criminal law along more accurately just lines, and impose upon the lawyer the duty of being the foe, instead of the friend, of his client.

But, in fact, this consideration of the duty of a lawyer in the case suggested is but an academic discussion, rarely of any practical application, because in actual practice the cases where it

would apply are few, after we have eliminated those in which the lawyer has rejected a defense because it is not acceptable to him, or has advised his client to plead guilty and take the usually lighter consequences, because they both know his guilt and know that he is likely to be convicted; and after we have eliminated also the possibility that although guilty of some offense, it may not be the crime charged, and the other possibilities that the lawyer himself may not be fully advised, or that the client may consider himself guilty when in truth and under the law he is not.

In some cases the law itself gives no recognition to the plea of guilty, but requires a trial to take place at all events, to determine the degree of guilt. This is true in New York in respect to the crime of murder in the first degree.

Nor can a lawyer always escape the defense of a guilty man. A situation may arise in which he may be compelled to defend. It may be assumed, for instance, that if every counselor at a given bar voluntarily rejected the cause of an accused able to pay, he might appeal to the court to assign counsel for his defense, and that in such case, as well as in the more common one of the impoverished accused, it would be a duty to accept the assignment. In that event the counsel, though he might advise a plea of guilty, would have no right to enter it against the protest of his client, but would be legally bound to see that he secured a fair trial, and that, if convicted, his conviction should be upon the evidence, and in accordance with law.

So it may be seen that extreme cases may arise in which it is the legal duty of the lawyer to defend a man whom he knows to be guilty, and in which he has no option. But ordinarily he can escape such a predicament,

because in the United States he is ordinarily free to reject a case which is tendered to him, if its defense is distasteful or abhorrent to him.

When the lawyer's personal interest alone is considered, or he seeks to subvert the law to secure to his clients what is legally denied to them, then the traditions and common precepts of the profession lay out for him a true and narrow course. These traditions have been formulated in the canons adopted by the American Bar Association, as a purely voluntary statement of the more common precepts of professional propriety. Space does not permit their full enumeration here, but the following quotation is an excellent summary:—

‘But above all a lawyer will find his highest honor in a deserved reputation for fidelity to private trust and to public duty, as an honest man and as a patriotic and loyal citizen.’

## VI

Lawyers have always been and doubtless always will be condemned by those who picture to themselves a distorted type, examples of which unfortunately do exist and have existed, who use their knowledge of the law to impose upon or circumvent the innocent and ignorant. But this type is as much condemned by the profession itself as by the most severe critic; it is not in any respect representative, and where it flourishes it does so in spite of professional traditions, and because either of the secret manner in which it works, or of the absence of efficient machinery in the courts to follow up and punish professional misdeeds.

Lawyers themselves are also moving forward more actively than ever before to weed this class out of the profession. They come into it and stay in it for purely commercial reasons, and there

ought to be no substantial difficulty in disbarring them when discovered. The members of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York have an active force of professional aids at work in the solution of this problem; the Committee on Grievances consists of volunteers who devote themselves to the work systematically throughout the year, meeting for the purpose of sifting complaints and taking evidence, on an average, more than one afternoon a week; its investigating and paid professional force, consisting largely of lawyers, costs the Association about \$23,000 a year, every cent of which is contributed, in the first place, by lawyers, members of the Association, and only a small fraction of which is returned out of the county treasury in case of successful prosecution. The New York County Lawyers' Association, with much smaller resources, does a similar work. The first-mentioned committee entertained and investigated, in 1912, 927 specific complaints against lawyers, and 29 complaints respecting the manner of administering justice in the county; and, in 1913, 819 complaints against lawyers, and 8 matters involving the administration of justice. This is a sample of the voluntary and expensive work which lawyers themselves, in a single community, are doing to meet the criticisms which are leveled against members of their profession, and it is practical and efficient work, and in that respect differs widely from much ill-founded criticism.

Conservatism is not necessarily an offense against society; it is frequently the excellent brake which prevents or retards a too facile descent of a dangerous declivity toward disorganization and anarchy. The law represents order, and order abhors a noisy and ill-considered clamor for change. Substantive law is fundamentally, accord-

ing as its source is traditional or statutory, a formulated expression of the habits of the people as interpreted by the lawmakers, or else an effort by the latter to make a portion of the people change their habits and adopt those which appeal favorably to the legislators; the latter class of laws is a fruitful source of discord, for reasons which are psychological and human. Lawyers as a body are unquestionably conservative, but from the ranks of the profession have always come some of the most efficient of reformers, when the time was ripe for their reforms.

The duty of advocating change is, however, not a professional one. It might be desirable to find all lawyers in the front rank of progress, but it is no professional duty to be there, and as many men have many minds, it is not surprising that there are differences of view among lawyers respecting the true direction of the line of actual progress.

I have said little to confute the charge that advocacy takes from its practitioner the rounded view of his duty to the man who is not his client. Advocacy is one of the professional duties of a lawyer, although it is not pursued so frequently as might be supposed.

Advocacy, in its larger sense, includes the conduct of the trial and the supervision of the testimony elicited, as well as the final argument thereon. It is an advocate's right, and may be his duty, to raise a legal objection to the admission of evidence. The advocate who now observes the ideals of his profession does not make futile or unfounded objections, nor does he in argument contend for unreasonable hypotheses. The average critic conceives some crafty Sergeant Buzfuz as the typical advocate and properly condemns him; and occasionally one meets such a man in practice; but when an advocate resorts to such pettifoggery,

it should be obvious to the court in respect to points of law, and to the jury in respect to matters of fact, and should, and I believe does, bring its merited reward of condemnation and failure. As for the tenets of the profession, however, its canon advocates candor and fairness in all such matters; and as for the opinion of the profession, it holds in greater contempt a successful pettifogger than does the layman, who either patronizes or praises.

From an intimate acquaintance with the activities of the profession, I am satisfied that in its ranks are the foremost of practical reformers of the law; that as a whole it is not inert; that it neglects no duty which it owes to society; that it deprecates unjust methods of advocacy; that it is not responsible for any faulty criminal procedure, or for the so-called technicality of the law; that its precepts are highly honorable and specific; that it commends to its members high standards of individual conduct; and that where it advocates or excuses behavior which appears to the casual critic reprehensible, such as the defense of one known to be guilty, it is for reasons of public policy, and with entire fidelity to the true interests of society. I am satisfied that the profession itself cannot be justly arraigned for any violation of duty, or of any obligation which society has imposed upon it, or which it owes to society. Where individual members of the profession have done reprehensible things, it has been in violation of professional standards, and not in conformity with them; and though lawyers as a body have not been alert at all times and places to detect and punish the shortcomings of their fellows, even here there is greater activity at present than ever before in the history of this country, as I could show in detail if I had not already transgressed the reasonable limits of this article.



# THE USELESS VIRTUES

BY RALPH BARTON PERRY

IF all the good advice that has ever been given were to be brought together and compared, it would probably be discovered that every piece could be matched with a contrary piece given by somebody else. The world's practical wisdom does not form a consistent system. No one man could possibly believe all of it at the same time. For example, there is equally good authority for believing that woman is the tyrant of man, and for believing that she is his puppet. Victor Hugo tells us that 'men are women's playthings; woman is the devil's'; while another Frenchman, Michelet, tells us that 'nearly every folly committed by woman is born of the stupidity or evil influence of man.' But it may be argued that in this case it is the very paradox itself which is proverbial. Take the less familiar example of self-consciousness. There are the moralists whose primary maxim is the Delphic oracle, 'Know thyself.' 'We should every night call ourselves to an account,' says Seneca. 'What infirmity have I mastered to-day? What passion opposed? What temptation resisted? What virtue acquired? Our vices will abate of themselves if they be brought every day to the shrift.' This is accounted wise, and carries conviction to conscience. But so does the contrary preaching of Carlyle, with his tirade against the 'unhealthy state of self-sentience, self-survey, precursor and prognostic of still worse health.'

It is horrible to contemplate the volume of discordant advice that is poured from pulpits, platforms, and editorial columns into the ears of that hapless reprobate, the plain man. It is perhaps fortunate that so little of it is followed. For it is always one-sided. It is characteristic of most advice and exhortation that it is only a part of the truth. It is an exaggeration of that particular half-truth which the exhorter thinks is timely, and which he believes is going to be offset by contrary influences. It is a push against some existing over-tendency, an attempt to stem some tide that is running too high, and in the hope of securing that balance and moderation in which right conduct always consists.

This is my apology for appearing with an exhortation which on the face of it may appear to be strained or even absurd. For I propose, in a sense, to preach *against efficiency or success*. I do so not because I do not see their importance, but because I suspect that my reader will already know their importance well enough, and possibly even too well. Or if he does not, there are many who can proclaim that importance more eloquently than I. There is something abroad, an irresistible social impulse, which is tending to promote the useful virtues, to encourage thrift, initiative, industry, coöperation, civic pride, and all those qualities of mind and will that make communities sound and prosperous. But were I to join the general praise of efficiency and utility, I should be seeing only



half the truth. And I know that if I were to follow the line of less resistance and urge what everybody already wants, I should be forfeiting the greater opportunity of speaking a word for that half-truth which has difficulty in getting a hearing and needs the strong support of every teacher or preacher. I want therefore to make out as strong a case as I can for what may in a sense be called *the useless virtues*, for those qualities of mind and will which cannot be measured by the standard of efficiency, but whose very value is inseparable from the fact that they do not immediately contribute to practical success.

## II

First of all it is necessary that we should reflect upon the meaning of a word that is perpetually in our mouths, the word 'practical.' It is not customary for us to reflect upon its meaning at all. It is supposed to express a finality. To call a thing practical is to praise it; to call it unpractical is to condemn it. It never occurs to us as a rule that practicality is a special kind of value. If that did occur to us, then of course we should be in the position of admitting that there is at least one other kind of value from which it may be distinguished. And this would be equivalent to admitting that when we call a thing practical or unpractical we have not, as is usually assumed, provided sufficient grounds for approving or rejecting it.

Let me select a homely example which will bring out what appears to me to be the meaning of practicality. Suppose a man to be driven to the roof of a burning building, while a crowd is gathered below to offer help or suggestions. Jones shouts, 'Get a ladder!' or indicates where one may be had, or gets one himself. Brown points out an adjacent roof by which

the refugee may pass to a place of safety. Several Smiths fetch a blanket and hold it to break his fall. Socrates who has happened by, and who appears to be less agitated than the rest, remarks (largely to himself, for he can find few to listen to him), 'I wonder what the man really wants. He appears to be desperately anxious to save his life. But is his life after all so prodigiously important as to warrant all this excitement? Has he good reasons for wishing to save himself? And what a poorly organized community this is, that such a thing should be allowed to occur! Why are buildings not fire-proof? What carelessness can have started the fire?' But before Socrates can proceed further with his ruminations he is roughly brushed aside. If he receives any consideration at all he will be regarded as a poor lunatic, or philosopher, or college professor.

Now which among these men is the practical man, and which the unpractical? I do not suppose that there can be the slightest doubt in any one's mind. The Joneses, the Browns, and the Smiths are the practical men, and Socrates (there is rarely even one such in any crowd) is theoretical, academic, a creature of mere intellect; harmless enough if he will only stay at home and write books which nobody reads, but very much in the way when there is something to be done.

But what is the precise difference between the Joneses, the Browns, and the Smiths on the one hand, and Socrates on the other? It appears to me that it comes down to this. The practical men accept circumstances as they find them; they take it for granted that the man wants to escape from the roof, and they regard the fire as an existing fact, which is not, for the moment at least, to be explained, but to be acted on. They do not go behind this concrete and present situation, except so far as

to assume on the victim's part the normal instinct of self-preservation. Taking these things for granted, without consciously reflecting upon them at all, they can devote all their faculties and energies to contriving a remedy. In so far as their minds are engaged at all they will be bent upon finding the means that will fit the situation. In this way the problem is enormously simplified, and there is strong likelihood of a prompt and effectual solution. If the crowd were made up entirely of Socrateses pondering all the whys and wherefores, life would be lost before any conclusions whatsoever would have been reached. To be practical, in short, is to confine one's attention to the effectual meeting of existing emergencies.

President Cleveland invented a phrase which is an almost perfect expression of the attitude of practicality. There is nothing profound about it, nor does it possess any striking literary merit; but it never fails to appeal, and has become a part of our common speech, so thoroughly does it coincide with the bias of common sense. He once remarked, as every one knows, 'It is a condition, and not a theory, that confronts us.' I do not remember what condition it was that confronted us; but the practical man is always confronted by a condition. I shall suggest presently that every condition does in truth involve a theory; but if so, the practical man ignores it. His practicality lies in confining himself to finding an act which will meet the condition. He has a family which must be supported, or an industrial plant which must be made to pay, or an examination which must be passed, or a game which must be won, or an office to which he proposes to be elected. His problem is the comparatively narrow and simple problem of finding the instrument to fit the occasion and achieve the result.

As a nation, we are commonly accused by unsympathetic Europeans of being excessively practical. We are supposed to specialize in practicality. Thus, when England wants a railroad system reorganized she looks to America for a manager; and when Germany wants to make a better record in the Olympic games she sends to America for a trainer. There is less demand in Europe for American poets and musical composers, and, I regret to say, for American philosophers. Now we may believe that this reputation is not deserved, or we may glory in it. But in either case we can afford at least to see just what it means. Consider for a moment the verdict of one of our harshest critics, Mr. Lowes Dickinson of Cambridge University. 'I am inclined to think,' he says, 'that the real end which Americans set before themselves is Acceleration. To be always moving, and always moving faster, that they think is the beatific life; and with their happy detachment from philosophy and speculation, they are not troubled by the question, Whither? If they are asked by Europeans, as they sometimes are, what is the point of going so fast? their only feeling is one of genuine astonishment. Why, they reply, you go fast! And what more can be said?'

Now no doubt this is a libel upon the American people, and might justly be resented. Or it might perhaps be proved that Mr. Dickinson's fellow countrymen are just as guilty in intent as we are; that they want to move fast, but, failing to do it, try to make out that the game is n't worth the candle, and that their rival's victory is hollow and fruitless, as a man who saw that he was losing a race might withdraw and try to persuade the spectators that it was a very childish and undignified proceeding anyhow. There would doubtless be a dash of truth in such a

retort, just enough to enable you to get the laugh on the other fellow. But it would be a shrewder thing to detect the truth in the criticism, learn one's fault, correct it, and leave the critic himself to stagnate in his own complacency.

Now Mr. Dickinson's criticism brings out cleverly enough the meaning of that practicality on which we pride ourselves, and which we hastily assume to be an absolute standard. Practicality means skill, energy, speed, quantity of performance, without reference to the profitableness of the result. Not that the result may not in point of fact be profitable — but the question is not raised. The profitableness of the result is assumed from the fact that everybody is mad about it. As the popular song puts it, 'everybody's doing it.' Whatever everybody is doing recommends itself without further justification. Whatever everybody's doing is 'the thing to do.' A man is willing to wear anything apparently, if his tailor says 'they're wearing them that way.' So we eagerly adopt the pursuits that we find in vogue; and apply ourselves to making a good showing.

Most people, perhaps, appear to be dividing their energies between three pursuits: making money, dancing, and playing baseball, or watching some one else play it. To make as much money as possible, to dance as well or as often as possible, and to defeat your opponent in sport, either personally or vicariously through a favorite team, — these tasks absorb the energies of the typical practical man. He does not adopt and follow a plan of life by conscious reflection, but he is constantly in a current of life, which flows now this way and now that, and sweeps him along with it. Or the practical man is like a man who finds himself in a great throng of athletes who are matching

their skill and speed and prowess against one another. He goes in for this or that, spurred by emulation, and seeks to outstrip his competitors in some race without concerning himself with the direction of the course, and the place in which he will find himself at the end of the race.

There is a false proverb which teaches us that whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. I call it false because it is so evident that there are some things which are only worth doing provided one is willing to do them ill. It is a part of practical wisdom to know what it is worth while to exert one's self about, and what may be done in a spirit of playful carelessness. But there is a more popular maxim which is so widely observed that it is never formulated — the maxim that whatever is done well is worth doing. This, I take it, is the maxim of the practical man. Do what the next man is doing, but go him one better. Make a record. There is a whole code of life in this passion for records. To make or hold a record means to excel everybody else in a precisely measurable degree. To excel everybody else in an activity in which everybody else would like to excel, *to hold the most coveted record*, this would represent the supreme practical success.

### III

We should now be sufficiently clear in our minds as to what practicality means. But it is evident that our critics in judging us to be a peculiarly practical people mean to accuse us of a fault; and we shall not have understood the criticism until we have come to see wherein the fault lies. It is evident that Mr. Dickinson, for example, means to convey the idea that this question, *Whither?* which is said to trouble us so little, is an important question; and that we are making a serious mistake

in ignoring it. He would mean, I think, to go further, and assert that this question, Whither? is the *most* important question. When we examine the matter more narrowly, it appears to come to this.

The very same instance of successful effort may be glorious or ridiculous, according as the result is itself worth while or not. I remember an adventure of my own that is in point. I left Cambridge with a friend to catch a six o'clock boat for Portland, Maine. We had been delayed in starting and upon consulting our watches in the car we found that unless we adopted extraordinary measures we should miss the boat. So we leaped from the car and hailed a passing cab. We bribed the driver to whip his horse into a gallop. As we approached the dock we saw the boat moving. Jumping from the cab with bags in hand, we ran down the dock and leaped aboard, flushed with our triumph. We had exerted ourselves desperately; we had been quick-witted and skillful; and I suspect that we had created a record. We had certainly succeeded. But when our excitement and breathlessness subsided we discovered that the boat *was just arriving*; and that it would not depart for several hours. Then something very extraordinary happened to our triumph. It suddenly collapsed and shriveled into a sorry joke. We felt ashamed and ridiculous, and sought to hide our diminished heads in the impersonal throng of bystanders.

I wonder if there is any better definition of that most hateful of predicaments, which we describe as 'having made a fool of one's self,' than to say that it is *to have exerted one's self for an end that turns out to be worthless in the attainment*. Suppose a man to have devoted himself passionately to the accumulation of riches, to have spent himself, literally, in getting them, and to

have prided himself on his skill and efficiency, only to find that the riches do not amount to anything when he has them; so that although he has been so extraordinarily busy in doing, he has in reality done nothing. Such a man might well feel in the flat and empty years of his ebbing life that he had played the fool; and that he might better have been less busy, if only he might then have taken a little time to think ahead and select some worthy goal before throwing himself headlong into the pursuit.

A moment's thought about the ends themselves, looking before you leap, curiously inquiring into the itinerary before joining the procession, a little cool philosophy before the heat of action, *disinterested reflection*, these are what I mean by the useless virtues — the unpractical wisdom of Socrates. Surely such wisdom has its place. You cannot make life up out of it altogether. Socrates in his most Socratic moods will not make an effective member of the fire brigade. There are times for action, and when they come the man of the hour is he who has no doubts, but only instincts and habits. Our instincts and habits, however, take care of themselves better than does our cool reflection. The mood of practicality is the vulgar mood; not in the sense of being debased, but in the sense of being usual or typical. For the individual it is the line of less resistance. Being usual, it sets the standards by which a man is judged by the crowd. It is favored by that popular prejudice called common sense. It requires no exhortation of mine in order to get a hearing. Therefore I urge, doubtless with some exaggeration, the value of the rarer but not less indispensable mood.

It would seem that practical efficiency and disinterested reflection might then divide life between them, each having its appropriate season, and

each requiring in society at large its special organs and devotees. But since we are for the moment the partisans of disinterested reflection, let us recognize a certain advantage that it has over its rival — the advantage, namely, of magnanimity. I mean that while disinterested reflection acknowledges the merit of its rival, practical efficiency in its haste and narrow bent is likely to be blind and intolerant. If I were asked, 'What, in the name of common sense, is philosophy?' I should be unable to answer. There is no answer. For amongst the categories of common sense there is no provision for philosophy. With a person wholly dominated by common sense, caught and swept along in the tide of practical endeavor, or wholly dominated by social habit, the philosophical part is in disuse and may be atrophied altogether. But if I ask, 'What, in the name of philosophy, is common sense?' I can find an answer — just such an answer perhaps as we are now giving. In short, disinterested reflection is more inclusive, and more circumspect, than practicality.

But I have not even yet exhausted the peculiar merits of the unpractical value of disinterested reflection. I have spoken of its importance as testing the value of ends, and so confirming or discrediting our more impetuous practical endeavor. But there is another point. I refer to the advantage of unapplied knowledge as giving man resourcefulness and adaptability, a capacity to meet novel situations. Let me attempt to make my meaning clear.

We praise science in these days, and most of us prefer it to poetry or philosophy, because we can see the *use of it*. It is characteristic of our practical standards that we regard such men as Watts, Bell, Morse, and Edison as typifying the value of science. The inventor, the engineer, is the man of solid achievement. Why? Because, again, he

supplies that for which the need is already felt. We want light, communication, and transportation, and such men as these give us what we want. Therefore we are grateful. Similarly, the man who discovers a cure for cancer will be a hero among men. There is a powerful demand, an eager longing for that which he will have to give, and his reward will be ready for him when he comes. Now we need not disparage his glory. But this is perfectly certain: when the discovery is made, it will be due to the store of physical, chemical, physiological, and anatomical truth which has been accumulated by men who were animated mainly by theoretical motives. These investigators have devoted themselves to winning knowledge for which there was at the time no practical demand. This means that they had to be sustained by something else than the popular applause which greets the man with the remedy. Such men are sustained no doubt by the encouragement of their fellow investigators, or by the patronage of the state. But they rely more than the inventor or engineer upon the inward support of their own love of truth, and upon a certain just pride of the intellect, such as Kepler felt when he wrote in the Preface to his *Weltharmonik*: 'Here I cast the die, and write a book to be read, whether by contemporaries or by posterity, I care not; it can wait for readers thousands of years, seeing that God himself waited six thousand years for some one to contemplate his work.'

But I had not meant to be sentimental about it, or to claim a greater heroism for the detached investigator. Indeed there is a sense in which his conduct is less praiseworthy, in so far as it is often self-regarding or unsocial, lacking in that motive of service which we rightly require of perfect conduct. It is sufficient that we should see that



what he does is indispensable. It is through his efforts that man is put into possession of a stock of free and unappropriated ideas with which to meet unexpected and unpredictable emergencies, or on which to construct new hypotheses. It is this possession of an ample margin of knowledge over the recognized practical necessities, of *intellectual capital*, so to speak, that is the condition of progress. It is this which more than anything else marks the difference between man and the brute, or between progressive societies and those static, barbarian societies in which human energy is exhausted by the effort to preserve existence with no hope of betterment.

## IV

It is now evident enough that what I have called useless virtues, or unpractical values, are not divorced from life in any absolute or ultimate sense. We may as well declare once and for all that there is no virtue or value whatsoever that is divorced from life in such a sense. That it is impossible that knowledge should be absolutely useless is self-evident. For to know at all is to know the world we live in; and to know it is to bring it within the range of action, pave the way to the control of it.

VOL. 114 - NO. 3

The better we know our world the more effectually we can live in it. This holds unqualifiedly. But there is a very great difference between what we might more correctly call *long-range* and *short-range* practicality.

What we usually speak of as practical would correspond to what I here speak of as short-range practicality. It means a readiness to meet the immediate occasion as is dictated by the momentary desire. Such practicality is a perpetual meeting of emergencies. It is a sort of living from hand to mouth, an uninspired and unilluminated opportunism. That which is ordinarily, or from this standpoint, condemned as unpractical, and which is unpractical from this *narrow* standpoint, may now be called long-range practicality. That is to say, it is that prevision, that thorough intellectual equipment, that wisdom as to the ultimate and comparative worth of things, without which there can be no security nor any confirming sense of genuine achievement. It is that which makes the difference between making a fool of one's self, however earnestly or even successfully, and living in a manner which would be able to endure the test of time, and would not appear ridiculous in the eyes of one who was a witness of eternity.



# THE FLAVOR OF THINGS

BY ROBERT M. GAY

'Life is sweet, brother.' — MR. PETULENGRO.

THERE can be no doubt that for some people mathematics has flavor, even though for me it is as the apples of Sodom. I have known people who seemed to be in love with the triangles. Permutations and combinations and the doctrine of chances filled their souls with elation; they would rather wander over the area of a parallelogram than over the greenest meadow under heaven, collecting angles and sides as another would daisies and buttercups, and chasing the unknown quantity as another might a butterfly.

I envy these people this faculty which I can never hope to acquire. I used to try to work up a factitious enthusiasm for geometry by naming angle A Abraham, B Benjamin, C Cornelius, and so on; side AB then became Abrajamin, side BC Benjanelius, side AC Abranelius, and the perimeter Abrajaminelius, — the last a name of Miltonic sonorousness, mouth-filling, and perfectly pronounceable if one scanned it as catalectic trochaic tetrameter.

Although I never had the courage to introduce them to my teachers, I regarded the Abrajaminelian family with some affection until one day I tried to name the perimeter of a dodecagon, when I came to the conclusion that it would require less time to learn the proposition by heart than to learn the name; and from that day I gave up all attempt to infuse an adventitious interest into Legendre, and simply memorized him.

418

I have heard geometry described as a 'beautiful science,' but —

If she be not fair to me,  
What care I how fair she be?

To me she was an obstacle in the path of knowledge; invisible, not hostile, but palpable and stubborn as the Boyg that gave Peer Gynt so much trouble. I tried in vain to squirm and wriggle past her. There is a possibility that I should still be blindly bumping that obstruction halfway up the Mathematical Mountains if my professor of solid geometry had not opportunely departed from college leaving no class-records behind him. I passed — by an intervention of Providence — and my days of pure mathematics were over; but I felt no undue elation, for applied mathematics remained. If I had impressed my instructors before as half-witted, here I was wholly witless. One cannot apply what one does not possess.

From a child I had had an obscure distrust of mechanism of all kinds. The people of Erewhon, you remember, feared it because they thought it had a soul: I feared it because it seemed to me to have none, until I discovered that its soul was mathematical, a new ground for trepidation. Even yet I cannot feel warmly toward a machine. I can gape with wonder as well as anybody as I watch the white paper fed in at one end of a press in, say, the Herald Building, and the Sunday Illustrated Supplement taken out at the other; but my wonder is only polite, merely intellectual; there is no heart

in it. My half hour spent thus has been instructive, it may be, but joyless.

This curious diffidence, amounting to a covert hostility, I felt also in the presence of the celestial mechanics. I had no sense of comfort in the company of the stars and planets. For a while I might be interested in the inhabitants of Mars, but Jupiter's satellites and Saturn's rings could arouse no emotional response in me. I irrationally found more to wonder at in a moon of green cheese than in a burned-out world.

Try as I may to overcome the aversions of my youth, I cannot help thinking of the quadratics and binomials of days long gone, whenever I look at a fly-wheel or a piston. Across the glories of the heavens I detect a shadow cast over my spirit when I tried on a college examination to explain parallax. At the time — for a day or two — I was rather proud of that explanation. Desiring, as usual, to get a picture of the thing, I used, I remember, the analogy of an umbrella. If it were raining, I said, and you had an open umbrella and you held it perpendicularly over you and then ran, you would get wetter than if you merely walked. Just what the connection was, I am — and doubtless was — unable to say; but it seemed very neat. I chuckled over it, and felt as if at last I was beginning to get ahead in astronomy. And then, briefly and coldly, the professor pronounced my analogy bosh, and the only glimmer of originality I ever evinced in his subject winked and went out.

If mathematics, pure and applied, had no flavor for me but an unpleasant one, I have no one to blame, I suppose, but myself, although, of course, I did blame my teachers. All through my boyhood I held the entirely unreasonable view that mathematicians were only slightly human, having, in fact, like their subject, no souls. Their sub-

ject as they presented it to me had a striking resemblance to the working of a machine, clean, precise, cold; it made me shiver. I felt for it the contempt of youth. Each science in turn I loved, as long as it had to do with things; but the moment mathematics entered, as it always did, soon or late, my love, as milk at the addition of certain bacteria, curdled and turned bitter.

Only the other day I listened to a lecturer on sun-spots expatiating on the enfranchising and ennobling power of his science, teaching as it does the majesty of God and his handiwork. I agreed, of course. Theoretically, I knew he was right; yet, as for myself, I could not help preferring to wonder at the hand of the Almighty in the creation of a dandelion, a sparrow, a flounder.

The best that's known  
Of the heavenly bodies does them credit small.  
View'd close the Moon's fair ball  
Is of ill objects worst,  
A corpse in Night's highway, naked, fire-scarr'd,  
accurs;  
And now they tell  
That the Sun is plainly seen to boil and burst  
Too horribly for hell.

The poet speaks enthusiastically, as poets will; besides, he was a Catholic and may have been affected by doctrine; I cannot wholly ratify his sentiments, yet I can understand them and sympathize.

Botanist and biologist friends call upon me to admire a paramoecium or a spirogyra; they will grow quite enthusiastic over one, as you or I might over a dog or a baby. I can share their emotions, to a degree; these little creatures, as the same poet observes, 'at the least *do live*'; yet I find that I cannot love a paramoecium or a spirogyra, streptococcus and micrococcus arouse no friendly feelings, oscillaria and spirillum can never compete for my affections with a calf or a puppy. I can sympathize imaginatively with the

microscopist who watches the contortions of an amœba or a polyp, its table-manners and general deportment; I can sit much longer at the microscope than at the telescope, and feel more comfortable there (Gulliver seems to have been more at his ease among the Lilliputians than among the Brobdingnagians); yet, once more, the hour spent thus has been instructive rather than joyous.

When I was a little boy, I used to get a great deal of satisfaction out of stroking a kitten or a puppy, or crushing a lilac leaf-bud for its spring fragrance, or smelling newly turned soil, or tasting the sharp acid of a grape tendril, or feeling the green coolness of the skin of a frog. I could pore for long minutes over a lump of pudding-stone, a bean-seedling, a chrysalis, a knot in a joist in the attic. There was a curious contentment to be found in these things. My pockets were always full of shells and stones, twigs and bugs; my room in the attic, of Indian relics, fragments of ore, birds' eggs, oak-galls, dry seeds and sea-weeds, bottled spiders, butterflies on corks. All the lessons of the schoolroom seemed of no consequence compared with Things so full of intimacy, of friendliness.

All children love things in this way, because of their appeal to the senses; and I suppose that all older people do, too, though they may not know it. My teachers used to try to make me see that a bird's egg or a hornet's nest is unimportant in comparison with the pageant of history, the beautiful mechanism of arithmetic; but what child cares anything about matters of abstract importance? I had a fondness for the hornet's nest because I could feel of it, poke a stick in at the door, and picture the fiery little termagants flying in and out, chewing their paper-pulp, building their walls. What had Washington praying at Valley Forge,

or even Lawrence refusing to give up the ship, to contribute comparable with this? Yet few even of my companions understood the ridiculous pleasure I found in carrying a crab's claw in my pocket, although they, too, after their own fashion, worshiped things. Their things were electric batteries and printing-presses and steam-engines.

My bosom-passion was for living things, — beast, bird, amphibian, reptile, fish, crustacean, insect, mollusc, worm, they were all one, if they were alive; and, wanting these, which could not well be carried in pockets or kept in bedrooms, I loved their reliques. While I was studiously collecting the *dissecta membra* of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, however, I did not realize that I was also laying up a store of memories that would in time make these seem about the only real things in the world. Here is the point. The common or curious but everyday objects of nature have for me a flavor so rich that they seem charmed, talismanic; they are my philosopher's stone, my quintessence, my One Thing which can charge the base metal of thought with the gold of feeling.

It is thus, I suppose, that poets and mystics are made, who see in the veriest stick or stone a symbol of one of the infinities. That I cannot do so, that I cannot make this passion the basis of a romanticism or a symbolism or a pantheism, is due, it may be, to my teachers who carefully discouraged any such nonsense. Practical people, they early taught me that 'life is real, life is earnest.' In church, too, I was duly informed that we are pilgrims and strangers traveling through a *barren* land.

Such instructions, running counter as they did to all I learned when left to myself, produced a curious state of anarchy in my microcosm. Belonging by nature to the class of the poetical and

by education to the class of the practical, I find myself torn between the desire to loiter and the desire to get on, passively to enjoy and actively to do. A practical conscience is fighting with a poetical unmorality.

I do not seem to be alone in this ambiguity. I see only an occasional person whom I could call completely practical, who treats things as if they were algebraic symbols, loving them only as they help him on in some enterprise or toward some goal. I find, on the contrary, the most hard-headed men and women collecting and cherishing books and prints and rose-bushes and tulips and stamps and coins and Colonial furniture and teapots and cats and dogs. Whether openly or secretly, brazenly or sheepishly, they are, nine tenths of them, addicted to the boy's habit of filling his pockets with inconsiderable nothings which he can finger and fondle. Nearly all of them defend their hobby on practical grounds, as educative, or restful, or cultural, or what not, yet one and all are really following an instinct. If you could get them to be honest, they would confess that from these useless objects they derive a satisfaction that they cannot explain but that has its seat, not in any motives of practicality, not even, as many think, wholly in a sense of possession, but in the things themselves as things. The things are rich in implications, adumbrations, of course, fully felt perhaps only by the possessor, yet, notwithstanding the accretions of memory and fancy, still things, appealing now, as in childhood, to the senses with warmth and friendliness, as only objects of sense can. They are charmed things. 'Every one of them is like the first link in a long chain of associated ideas. Like the dwelling place of infancy revisited in manhood, like the song of our country heard in a strange land, they produce upon us an effect

wholly independent of their intrinsic value.'

Macaulay here is speaking of the connotation of words, that which gives most of its flavor to literature. It seems to me, however, that words, wonderful as they are in their power to set the mind running, still lag far behind things. They are at their best only secondhand. The phrase 'an old rusty spade,' suggests little except an antiquated implement for digging; but as a thing, an old spade may call up thoughts of death and the grave, snow forts, green gardens, buried treasure, — all the digging and ditching since Adam delved and Eve span.

I cannot think that it is entirely mundane to make such a to-do about that which we are accustomed to call the material. Although it is becoming old-fashioned to confess to a liking for domesticity, there are still few honest people who do not become attached to a home if they live in it long enough. It may be filled with surprisingly ugly furniture, and pictures such as may jar upon the finer sensibilities of the visitor, yet the ugliest becomes lovely with time.

Next to the fellowship of the family, it is the furniture that makes the home, and old furniture is best. We become fond of a chair or a table or a bed almost as we do of a person, because, as we say, of its associations. Now, I look upon things as the furniture of the world, furniture that was there when we came into it and will be there when we go out, — veritable antiques with all the charm of age about them. Try to picture a world empty of things material and furnished only with mathematical formulæ, and with social theories, theological speculations, and philosophic systems. Try to imagine — But no. These matters 'must be not thought after these ways; so, it will make us mad.'

Our forefathers had an interesting theory that swallows lived on air. Because the birds were observed to fly with their mouths open and never to come to ground, it was concluded that they must be classed with the knights of the Round Table and the chameleons as aerophagi. There are many aerophagi abroad in the land to-day, high-flying folk who live on airy *isms* and *ologies*, and who are scornful of those who long for less windy food. Why one man loves things and another theories, or why one loves things for their connotations and another for their use, or why one loves some kinds of things above all others, remains as inexplicable as why one cannot abide a gaping pig, why one a harmless neces-

sary cat. It is all taste and temperament.

Yet there are times when I grow tired of socialism and industrialism and syndicalism and Nietzscheism and Bergsonism and feminism; times when I do not want to be a reformer or an up-lifter or even a public-spirited citizen; when 'I do not hunger for a well-stored mind' and am tired of books, and of talking about them and urging others to read them. With much bandying-about these become unreal; one is filled with doubt about them, about their very existence, at least about their importance. It is in such moods that one longs for the kitten or puppy, the lilac leaf-buds, the bean seedling, the chrysalis, the frog.

## THE CONTRIBUTORS' CLUB

### SOME LETTERS I HAVE KNOWN

THE preservation of letters amounts to something like a mania with people who regard every scrap of a friend's handwriting as sacred and to be treasured as one of the heirlooms of the family. They give great trouble to those who come after them. In old garrets may be found bundles of letters, tied up in their faded ribbons, which, if posterity is wise, will be tossed without hesitation into the fire. Let us open one of them. The writer is in distress. Four cooks, all equally worthless, have come and have been dismissed in as many weeks. The roof has been leaking and a carpet upon an upper floor is *destroyed* (underlined). 'Poor Aunt Martha!' her niece had exclaimed as she read this 'chronicle of small beer,'

'her troubles have once more inspired her pen! The last time she wrote, we were loudly called upon for sympathy in the calamity of her new black silk dress which the dressmaker *RUINED!*' (doubly underlined and with an exclamation point).

Still, I recall the charming letters which occasionally came from an English lady to her friends on this side of the Atlantic, in about the year 1840. On the arrival of one of these letters we were invited to the reading. In the evening, after dinner, we assembled in the drawing-room, sitting around the table or by the fireside, with our needlework, and listened with rapt attention while a member of the party read these interesting letters. They were written on large paper of the foolscap size, in double columns, like the pages of a

magazine. Their style was picturesque, often poetical, not without an element of romance when she told of the marriage of her young niece, beautiful and accomplished, and going off to India with her brave young soldier bridegroom.

In contrast to these were the letters a dear old lady used to receive from her daughter, married and living in a New England town. They were in brief sentences reminding us of what the mathematical gentleman said of the Dictionary: 'This is all mere assertion, nothing is proved.' In an afternoon call we were told, 'I have received a letter from Harriet; would you like to hear it?' Of course we would, so it was brought forth and read to us with that slow precision which is adopted by many elderly people in reading handwriting which must be treated with respect, and not hurried over glibly as if it were merely printed matter. It was a neat little epistle, all the little 'i's' were dotted, all the little 't's' crossed. At the top of the page the date was duly written, the day of the month, the year of Our Lord. Then it began:

MY DEAR MOTHER: —

I received your letter two weeks ago yesterday. I was glad to hear from you. We are all well. Tommy has recovered from the measles. The housecleaning is finished. The garden looks very pretty. There are a good many roses. I have a new bonnet. It is of white straw; it is trimmed with pale green ribbon; it looks very neat. Mrs. Wilson called yesterday, she is very pleasant. I am coming to see you in August. I shall bring Tommy with me. I hope you keep well.

Your affectionate daughter,

HARRIET L. STEBBINS.

'Now, is n't that a good letter?' we are asked. Good indeed! Is not the

mother told, concisely, all that she wishes to know about her daughter's welfare? Can we not see Harriet in her well-ordered house, taking strict care of everything; seeing that the housecleaning is thoroughly done; nursing Tommy through the measles; taking the pleasant Mrs. Wilson into the garden; cutting a bunch of roses for her? When the letter is finished it is carefully folded and returned to its envelope with a happy smile. 'What a pretty hand Harriet writes!' she says. Once we nearly lost our composure when, after regarding the envelope admiringly for a few seconds, the mother exclaimed rapturously, 'How true that stamp is put on!' Certainly Harriet *was* a paragon! She did everything well, even to the sticking on of a postage stamp. Has not genius itself been defined as 'the infinite capacity for taking pains'?

Of love letters much has been written. It is not necessary to expatiate upon the love letters of the man, who through long years of waiting and discouragement continues faithful to the end of his life. Nor yet upon the ephemeral love letters of the too ardent youth, who, after a few months have passed, devoutly wishes those letters never had been written. We shall speak only to the love letters of an Italian count, which diverted the inmates of a boarding house in New York City during a winter not many years ago. In the autumn there had arrived an old lady, unlovely in appearance, somewhat grotesque in apparel, lately returned from Italy, where she had met the good-looking, but impecunious, young count, who, having been told that she was a rich American, made love to her and wrote her the most impassioned love letters. She did not let concealment prey upon her. Nearly every one in the house was taken into her confidence and shown the letters. One



evening, at dessert, she tossed an apple paring over her shoulder, and asked her neighbor at the table, 'Can you see what letter that makes?' 'It looks more like a "Q" than anything else,' was the reply. 'I wish it were a "G",' she said. The count's name was Giovanni. She wore an aspect of bland content, which, as the season wore on, gave place to a green and yellow melancholy. 'When have you heard from the count?' she was asked one day. 'I think he is offended with me,' she answered sadly. 'He wanted me to ask Mr. Carnegie to pay off the mortgage on his villa.' 'How much is the mortgage?' 'Seventeen thousand dollars. I could not go to see Mr. Carnegie. I wrote to him and asked him to come and see me, but he has never answered my letter.' After this, no more was heard of Count Giovanni and his love letters.

Letters, as well as money, have been known to remove an obstacle to a marriage. When I was a young girl my mother had a pretty young maid named Angeline, who had a follower, a young man whose position in life was a peg higher than her own in the social scale. His brother, a prosperous grocer, and his brother's wife, made ineffectual attempts to undo the entanglement, but the young fellow was faithful. He used to spend all his spare evenings in the kitchen with Angeline and take her out on Sunday afternoons, when she imagined that she looked like a lady, — for she spent all of her wages upon clothes, and, like a certain lady's maid, 'affected the latest fashions, but was a failure in gloves.' Despite the fact that he was so attentive, she had grave fears that he might prove inconstant. She was of a morbid temperament and confessed that she sometimes came downstairs in the night and hid the carving-knife, for fear she might do herself an injury,

illogically concluding that she could not find it if she were seized with a desire to cut her throat. After one of these nights, she would appear in the morning with a countenance of gloom. 'Are you not well, Angeline?' she would be asked. 'Oh, yes, ma'am, I am very well, only I just feel as if I should n't never see Hen again.' 'Why, did you quarrel last night?' 'Oh, no, ma'am, we don't never quarrel!' 'Then what is the matter?' 'Nothin' ain't the matter, only I just feel as if I should n't never see Hen again.'

In spite of these dark forebodings, the evening visits continued, till one afternoon Hen came to say good-bye. He had suddenly decided to go to Chicago to seek his fortune. Then it was feared that the poor girl might indeed never see her lover again. It was not long, however, before a letter came to Angeline from Chicago, written in a sprawling hand, grammar and spelling cast to the winds. Hen was prospering. He described his boarding house as 'very pleasant, no *atention* is n't paid to *meat* form, like the big hotels.' As usual, the poor girl's happiness was overclouded by doubt and fears. How could she ever answer this beautiful letter? In her dilemma she appealed to my little sister, whose handwriting was remarkably pretty, and whose disposition was sweet and obliging. In the evening, after her work was finished, Angeline would come to my sister and the two together would compose the innocent little letters. Sometimes there would be a quotation from a song. I remember one: —

Never from memory will fade those bright hours,  
(that is, the evenings in the kitchen)  
So sacred to friendship and thee.

As may be supposed, words could hardly express the young man's emotion when he received these refined letters. His pride in his Angeline knew no bounds. The correspondence continued

at intervals till the next June, when the lover came back to be married.

'It was them letters as done it,' said the sister, Marthy, envious of what she considered Angeline's good fortune. Let us hope that they were happy ever after.

'Man was made to mourn' over the invention of the picture post-card, and 'countless thousands mourn' when they see it come, as it does, from every corner of the globe, sent forth broadcast by indolent and selfish people. They will not trouble themselves to write the letter which would have afforded comfort and relief to the hearts of parents and friends, pining for some definite intelligence of far-away children or relatives. It was not bad advice which the old lady, who had no use for adverbs, gave her daughter, who was embarking for six months travel in foreign lands. The barren brevity of her letters from school had too often brought disappointment to her mother's heart. 'Don't you dare,' said the old lady, 'to send me any of those trashy picture-cards. I can buy as many of them as I want from the Pyramid down at the corner. I don't want no view of the Coliseum (the *Colisyum*, she called it); everybody who goes to Rome sends me a Colisyum card. Foolish things — I just burn 'em all up. Why don't they wait till the building is finished? I suppose the contractors keep puttin' them off, as they did us when we was buildin'. No, don't you think you can put me off with none of them. Wherever you be, just set down and write me a letter, and write satisfactory, and write particular, and write explicit, and, above all, write comprehensible!'

Against the plain post-card no objection can be made. Its usefulness, in emergencies, is undeniable, and the amount of information which can sometimes be spread over its surface is sur-

prising. There is a lady who conducts her entire correspondence through this channel. She reveals secrets supposed to be the most profound, relates misdeemeanors and indiscretions with a reckless disregard of the consequences. One of her cards reads like the discourse of Jingle in the *Pickwick Papers*: for instance: —

'Dick Dawson dead — they say morphine. Flirtatious Julia Mitchell. Scandalous! Mrs. Dick resentful. Wore red dress at funeral. Beautiful summer. Roses and strawberries, profusion.'

Then, later: —

'July weather, great heat. Mrs. Dawson still resentful — has found Julia's letters to Dick — shown them about everywhere — says she will hound Julia to the day of her death.'

Her confidence is unbounded in the integrity of postmen and bell-boys, while the latter may be seen any morning, sitting on the doorsteps of apartment houses, making merry over the post-card correspondence.

Woe to the man whose conscience slumbers, seared with a hot iron, when letters come to him pleading, often pathetically, for the payment of debts. A poor French wine-merchant once confided to a gentleman the trouble he had with a man who had been long owing him for some wine. 'At last,' he said, 'I wrote to him. My God! he was very angry. He said I thought he would not pay. It was not that — I would not care if he did not pay for three years. It was the *silence*, you understand. When your letters are not answered, the first time you say, "He have not received them," the second time you say, "He is away," the third time you say, "He is *seeck*," the next time you say, "He wants to steal me that money!"'

It is related of another merchant that, impatient at the long delay of a customer in settling his accounts with

him, he said at last to his young clerk, 'Write to that man and tell him that I can wait no longer!' 'What shall I write to him?' the young man asked. The merchant was hurried and answered crossly and without thought, 'Something or nothing, and that soon!' In a few days a check came from the delinquent, paying the entire amount of his indebtedness. Surprised, the merchant asked his clerk, 'What did you write to that man?' 'Just what you told me to,' the young man answered. 'I did not tell you what to write.' 'Yes, you did; you said, "Something or nothing, and that soon." I wrote that.'

True, O Uncle Joshua, it takes some one more wise than a fool to 'compose a letter.'

#### ASYLUMS FOR THE HOPELESSLY SANE

THESE are courageous, intelligent days, when the world is taking itself in hand and studying its own wants, with the effect of divining some needs which our fathers crassly ignored. Our psychological development enables us more and more to look below the obvious surface of the demands of our civilization. Among other things, we are beginning to feel the necessity of erecting a few asylums for the hopelessly sane. The progress, if not the actual safety, of the commonwealth requires them.

Fortunately, there would never have to be many such institutions in existence; for sanity in its advanced stages is not a disease widely prevalent among human communities, and incipient sanity can generally be checked. But the demand might support a supply of one to every state.

What are the symptoms of sanity, and what are the dangers inherent in its development? Some of us know only too well. We have tried to deal

with sane people. But others, more fortunate, have never felt the chilly blanketing of the malign influence, its distortion of the generous values of life, and they have to have their eyes opened to the thwarting peril.

Sanity holds such a wise equipoise among the conflicting forces of a none too sagacious world that it never gets pulled in any one direction more than in another. That sounds all right. Yes, the insidious nature of sanity is to sound all right. But some of the forces of the world are much better than others; some are so gloriously excellent that they should be yielded to utterly, followed without reserve to their extreme conclusion. What are such forces to make of a person who says, 'Ah, well, yes, that does all very well; but you go too fast and too far, you become undignified. I agree with you, cautiously, up to a certain point. There I draw the line.' Sane people are always drawing lines. That is one of the surest indications of their malady. As if the hard-and-fast lines of our human destiny were not already drawn close enough! As if, enlisted in a good cause, we had any business to set ourselves boundaries!

Sanity is Argus-eyed, and sees a great many sides to every question. That, again, sounds very well. Surely, a catholic disposition is all to the good. But it does not look deep enough to compare one side with another; for, if it did, its individual temperament would compel it to preference. The great organization that has monopolized the term catholic, has a single vision and emphatic preferences. But it may be that sanity dispenses with individual temperament, and so foregoes the very standard of choice. At any rate, by its wide tolerant recognition, it commits itself to a policy of passivity in an active world.

But is sanity tolerant? If it were, it

would at least be harmless, and there would be no need for the Sane Asylums. Unfortunately, like all its other characteristics, tolerance grants it only up to a certain point. Beyond that, a decided negation takes possession of it and makes it a grim force in the world.

One has only to study the history of humanity's greatest movements to see how this works out. The early Church went careering madly, bent wholly, fiercely, on righteousness, cutting off its hands, plucking out its eyes in every direction. The Kingdom might perhaps have come as soon as the disciples expected if that *élan* had continued. But then Constantine arose, at the same time giving the new religion its first organized chance and teaching it its first lessons in worldly wisdom. 'Very well; you have your good points; I will help you — especially since, if I don't, you seem likely to make things unpleasant for me. But you go too far. You must learn self-control. I will set you an example by deferring my baptism till the hour of my death.' Perhaps it is ungracious to criticize the first Christian emperor; but certainly since his day, the Church has ceased plucking out its eyes, and no longer succeeds in making things effectively unpleasant for anybody. It would speak volumes if some Tammany magistrate, some iniquitous factory overseer, should feel the necessity of committing himself to baptism rather than suffer the slings and arrows of some outrageous religious denomination. Unhappily, it speaks other volumes that no one does.

Enthusiasm is too sensitive and spiritual an essence not to suffer from the shock and chill of encounter with prudence. It draws in its tentacles, contracts; and, when it recovers itself, finds itself a changed being in a hardening world. There is then nothing for

it but to go slowly; for hard things require deliberate manipulation. Only things made molten by a fire of love and zeal flow swiftly into place.

One sees, then, how fatal the touch of sanity may be. It is not precisely contagious, for most of us — thank heaven! — have no germs of it in us; but it is very arresting. It interrupts the momentum by which many a good cause, if left to itself, would have carried all before it. When the world at last makes up its mind to become and to do that which it promised nineteen hundred years ago, it will have to begin by locking all its strictly sane people out of the way.

But if sanity is so thwarting, does it follow, on the other hand, that madness is the disposition which best suits human life? Natural selection seems to have found it so. Everybody is mad when he is most spontaneously, most effectively himself. For then he is literally beside himself, carried out of, away from himself, lost to his own recognition in the mighty sweep of his cause. He does not stop to weigh and consider, to balance expediencies; he lets himself go, and, almost without knowing it, accomplishes great things. He who is not mad when he is in love is a pretty poor kind of lover; and what are we all but desperate lovers of Heaven?

Madness is an attribute of youth, and sanity of maturity. That is the reason why a beneficent Providence has decreed that the span of human life shall be so comparatively short, and that nations and civilizations shall be so frequently dissolved and dispersed. Only when people and countries are young, do they make vigorous history. When they take to turning on themselves and asking soberly, 'Is this worth while? Are we not becoming ridiculous?' they have to be safely annihilated. Then the world-progress,

sorely interrupted and impeded, can gather itself together and go on again.

This is all quite too bad. For youth's inexperience is its serious handicap; and maturity's wisdom might stand it in good stead, if it were not taken in such over-doses that it becomes a poison. If people and nations could only conserve their madness through the whole course of their experimenting lives, learning the rules of the game while still devoting their passionate attention to the goal, they might end by making some really great and brilliant achievements.

Perhaps, then, sanitariums would be better than asylums for our sane. Instead of waiting till they become hopeless and then committing them permanently, it might be well to note the first symptoms and take them in hand. For the groundwork of human nature is so vital and healthy that, if it is encouraged, it can almost always throw off incipient sanity. The methods of such sanitariums would be interesting to devise. Patients not too far advanced in their malady would have a good time. They would be constrained to devote themselves recklessly to whatever they held most dear (provided the causes were approved worthy); they would be made to take risks, commit imprudences. By some ingenious arrangement of the daily curriculum, they would be constantly given the choice between that which is spontaneous, vital, and that which is reasonable; and, when they chose the latter, they would be hissed. A fine place, such a sanitarium! Stimulating, inspiring, invigorating. We should all of us want to go there, for very love of the standard, for very joy in the great contagion of enthusiasm. Sane and insane alike, we should look upon the experience as a sort of religious 'retreat.'

Ah! it is a desperate business, this life, to which we are so obscurely, so

inexplicably committed. Our only chance with it is to take it desperately. It is infinitely greater than we are, it knows what it is about, its cosmic intentions endure. We are wise when we let ourselves go with it; we are very silly when we weigh and reserve our allegiance. So, then, the sane are the only insane? That is possible.

#### IN A TRAIN WITH LAMB

I WAS riding in a train with Charles Lamb — who never rode in one in all his shadowed life. I doubt whether he would have cared for it. When he went to Coleridge's or to Mackery End by coach there was a slowness of transit that did not forebode the putting of great distances between himself and his beloved London. But a train! — whizz and clang! and many miles away from Fleet Street in an incredibly short space of time! He would have fancied the impossibility of ever going back over such a distance. Of course, in reality, the going back would have been as swift; but Charles Lamb no more dwelt amid realities than did I reflect reality when I wrote of riding with him in a train. What I truly meant was that I had his essays with me; and as I was buried in "Schoolmasters New and Old" the subconscious contrast was in my mind between the coach of which he told — the leisurely and I hope comfortable coach — and my clanking train which was making a blur of all the beauty near at hand and leaving for the eye's delight only the more distant landscape.

It was in raising my eyes from the book for a second to look at the distant hills — misty, as I love hills best — that I brought about a longer interruption of my reading than I had intended. My own fault, of course, for deserting the page; one who wants to find the crock of gold should never allow his



eyes to leave the guiding fairy. But Lamb so vividly described the bore with whom he was riding in the coach that I forewent for a moment the delight of his page to reflect with sardonic and not sufficiently guilty pleasure on the boredom of visiting relatives whom I had escaped by a far from truthful story that I must make a journey into the country. Yet, 'a feller has to fish' — and as I laid my hand affectionately on the rod which stood beside me I reflected that the imperative in the line quoted afforded at least some salve for conscience. And it was with this feeling of stifled scruples that I was turning back to the volume when the man who sat between me and the window spoke.

I had no further noted him in taking my seat than to observe that he was bulky and left me none too much room. Now, as he spoke and I perforce looked at him, I saw that his face was mate to his body in its bulkiness, and that there was little in it to indicate companionship for me.

He pointed to a building of galvanized iron which was going up at the farther edge of a marsh over which we were traveling.

'Do you happen to know what that is intended for?' he inquired.

With politeness that denoted a total lack of interest I replied that I did not.

'I heard that big woolen mills are to be put up in this neighborhood,' he said, 'and I wondered if that could be the building.'

I did not know, I was sure. I lack the temperament which enables one to turn abruptly away from a bore — and although perhaps not encouraged, he was at least not sufficiently discouraged by my reticence to be prevented from saying, —

'There would be a fine opening for a big woolen mill here.'

I tried to think of something pat to the occasion — I could not; I saw something opposite in the form of a flock of grazing sheep, but was afraid that mention of them would make him further discursive, and depended upon nods and half-muttered negatives and assents to silence him. But this was not easy. He was interested in woolen mills and craved conversation about them. Then the recollection that a chewing-gum factory was to be erected in the neighborhood furnished a cud for his audible reflections to several minutes' extent. The wonder to me was that he could be so interested in these things, yet talk so stupidly of them. I am not one of the bookish sort who look upon books as the only worth-while topic of conversation; but one who cannot talk well upon the only things he knows, as was the case with this man, should talk only to himself.

I was becoming desperate when the delightful reflection came upon me that I was going through an episode such as had befallen Lamb on the stage-coach — that I had deserted an account of his distressing experience only to plunge into something similar. So absorbed did I become in dwelling upon the comparison that I ceased listening to what the man was saying till he leaned toward me and asked, —

'May I inquire what you are reading?'

I wanted to shout with laughter. It was with real effort that I suppressed at least a chuckle. What an opportunity! He should see the book — his attention should be called to the passage wherein Lamb drew the schoolmaster who must have been one of my neighbor's ancestors. With my finger ready to point to the passage as one especially worth reading, I extended the book to him.

'Lamb,' I said.

I had regarded him as a man who,



should a waiter say, 'Lamb, sir?' would look epicureanly reflective. What other application of the word could appeal to him?

But at my reply his heavy face grew all a-sparkle.

'Lamb!' he cried. 'I hope for your sake that you love him as I do. To know him is enough to make one happy for life.'

By this time he had the volume in his hand, and my changed heart was beating in sympathy with his.

He flipped the pages rapidly, slowly, glancing here and there, reading here and there, sometimes to himself with great inner rumblings, sometimes to me — until I impatiently but politely took the book from him and had my share of glance and comment. He liked some passages better than I did — I liked others better than he did. For some our admiration was equally shared.

'What a fellow!' he said. 'Remember his friend George! — what was his other name? Well, it does n't matter. But you remember, don't you, how he was leaving Lamb's house one night, and fell into the river; and Lamb and others fished him out, all but drowned; and how the sappy eccentric stood there and said, happy over his own perception, "Huh, I knew all the time that I was in the river"?''

What joy to meet a man who knows and loves your favorite story of all stories!

With equal gusto I reviewed Lamb's letter in which he wrote of his journey home from the doctor's party astride a friend's back — it having been a party of the sort that makes walking difficult for a true devotee of gin. So overjoyed was my new acquaintance at the re-awakened memory of this letter that he thumped me heartily on the back to emphasize his delight. Now, I am sensitive about being thumped on the back, but on this occasion it seemed to be

quite in keeping with the boisterousness of the doctor's party.

It was with real regret that I prepared to leave him at my journey's end — real regret until he said, 'Sorry you're going; we have n't had time to go through my favorite essay, "Schoolmasters New and Old."' Then I was rather glad that we had to part.

#### FLAT PROSE

SOME time ago a writer in the *Atlantic* protested against the taboo on 'beautiful prose.' He asserted that the usual organs of publication, especially in America, reject with deadly certainty all contributions whose style suggests that melodious rhythm which De Quincey and Ruskin made fashionable for their generations, and Stevenson revived in the nineties. He complained that the writer is no longer allowed to write as well as he can; that he must abstract all unnecessary color of phrase, all warmth of connotation and grace of rhythm from his style, lest he should seem to be striving for 'atmosphere,' instead of going about his proper business, which is to fill the greedy stomach of the public with facts.

Unfortunately, this timely fighter in a good cause was too enamored of the art whose suppression he was bewailing. He so far forgot himself as to make his own style 'beautiful' in the old-time fashion, and thus must have roused the prejudice of the multitude, who had to study such style in college, and knew from sad experience that it takes longer to read than the other kind.

But there are other and safer ways of combating the taste for flat prose. One might be to print parallel columns of 'newspaper English' (which they threaten now to teach in the schools) until the eye sickened of its deadly monotony. This is a bad way. The average reader would not see the point.

Paragraphs from a dozen American papers, all couched in the same utilitarian dialect, — simple but not always clear, concise yet seldom accurate, emphatic but as ugly as the clank of an automobile chain, — why, we read thousands of such lines daily! We think in such English; we talk in it; to revolt from this style, to which the Associated Press has given the largest circulation on record, would be like protesting against the nitrogen in our air.

And who wants to bring back color, rhythm, beauty, a sense of the innate value of words, to the news column, or even to the editorial page! It takes too long to read them now.

Books and magazines require a different reckoning. The author is still allowed to let himself go occasionally in books — especially in sentimental books. But the magazines, with few exceptions, have shut down the lid, and are keeping the stylistic afflatus under strict compression. No use to show them what they might publish if, with due exclusion of the merely pretty, the sing-song, and the weakly ornate, they were willing to let a little style escape. With complete cowardice, they will turn the general into the particular, and insist that in any case they will not publish *you*. Far better, it seems to me, to warn editors and the 'practical public' as to what apparently is going to happen if ambitious authors are tied down much longer to flat prose.

It is not generally known, I believe, that post-impressionism has escaped from the field of pictorial art, and is running rampant in literature. At present, Miss Gertrude Stein is the chief culprit. Indeed, she may be called the founder of a coterie, if not of a school.

Her art has been defined recently by one of her admirers, who is also the subject, or victim, of the word-portrait from which I intend later to quote in

illustration of my argument. 'Gertrude Stein,' says Miss Dodge, 'is doing with words what Picasso is doing with paint. She is impelling language to induce new states of consciousness, and in doing so language becomes with her a creative art rather than a mirror of history.' This, being written in psychological and not in post-impressionist English, is fairly intelligible. But it does not touch the root of the matter. Miss Stein, the writer continues, uses 'words that appeal to her as having the meaning they *seem* to have [that is, if 'diuturnity' suggests a tumble downstairs, it *means* a tumble downstairs]. To present her impressions she chooses words for their inherent quality rather than their accepted meaning.'

Let us watch the creative artist at her toil. The title of this particular word-picture is 'Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia.' As the portrait itself has a beginning, but no middle, and only a faintly indicated end, I believe — though in my ignorance of just what it all means I am not sure — that I can quote at random without offense to the impressions derivable from the text.

Here then are a few paragraphs where the inherent quality of the words is said to induce new states of consciousness: —

'Bargaining is something and there is not that success. The intention is what if application has that accident results are reappearing. They did not darken. That was not an adulteration. . . . There is that particular half of directing that there is that particular whole direction that is not all the measure of any combination. Gliding is not heavily moving. Looking is not vanishing. Laughing is not evaporation.

'Praying has intention and relieving that situation is not solemn. There comes that way.

'There is all there is when there has

all there has where there is what there is. That is what is done when there is done what is done and the union is won and the division is the explicit visit. There is not all of any visit.'

After a hundred lines of this I wish to scream, I wish to burn the book, I am in agony. It is not because I know that words *cannot* be torn loose from their meanings without insulting the intellect. It is not because I see that this is a prime example of the 'confusion of the arts.' No, my feeling is purely physical. Some one has applied an egg-beater to my brain.

But having calmed myself by a sedative of flat prose from the paper, I realize that Miss Stein is more sinned against than sinning. She is merely a red flag waved by the *Zeitgeist*.

For this is the sort of thing we are bound to get if the lid is kept down on the stylists much longer. Repression has always bred revolt. Revolt breeds extravagance. And extravagance leads to absurdity. And yet even in the absurd, a sympathetic observer may detect a purpose which is honest and right. Miss Stein has indubitably written nonsense, but she began with sense. For words *have* their sound-values as well as their sense-values, and prose rhythms *do* convey to the mind emo-

tions that mere denotation cannot give. Rewrite the solemn glory of Old Testament diction in the flat colorless prose which just now is demanded, and wonder at the difference. Translate 'the multitudinous seas incarnadine' into 'making the ocean red,' — or, for more pertinent instances, imagine a Carlyle, an Emerson, a Lamb forced to exclude from his vocabulary every word not readily understood by the multitude, to iron out all whimsies, all melodies from his phrasing, and to plunk down his words one after the other in the order of elementary thought.

I am willing to fight to the last drop of ink against any attempt to bring back 'fine writing' and ornate rhetoric into prose. 'Expression is the dress of thought,' and plain thinking and plain facts look best in simple clothing. Nevertheless, if we must write our stories, our essays, our novels, and (who knows) our poems in the flat prose of the news column, — if the editors will sit on the lid, — well, the public will get what it pays for, but sooner or later the spirit of style will ferment, will work, will grow violent under restraint. There will be reaction, explosion, revolution. The public will get its flat prose, and — in addition — not one, but a hundred Gertrude Steins.'